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BY

CAPTAIN BASIL HALL,

R.N., F.R.S.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON :

EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.

MDCCCXLI.

LONDON:
BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

940.98

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CHAPTER I.

THE TIDE HARBOUR.

I HARDLY know two things more different in appearance, than what is called a tide harbour, when the sea is in, and the same harbour when the sea is out. At high water we behold a beautiful basin, brim full, and bearing on its surface numberless vessels, all of whose masts, ropes, and sails loosed to dry, are reflected in the mirror upon which they rest, so gracefully, that we know not which to admire most, the bold originals, in all their pomp and bustle, or their inverted and softened representations beneath. The little boats which pass up and down, or flit across the harbour, and the ships arriving or departing, some dropping their anchor with a thundering plash into the stream, and others laboriously heaving up that ponderous mass of iron to their bows, give an endless variety to this busy scene. The cheerful voice of the seamen, singing as they work, mingling with the anxious word of command spoken by the cautious

pilots, form a fitting music for the scene. Even the brawling of the noisy boatmen has its characteristic and stirring interest, as they cross and recross the port with hawsers, which they tie and untie, or pass along from post to post, with an address that astonishes the ignorant and delights the professional eye, netting the whole space over with cords, with the industry of spiders, as if their mischievous purpose were to catch and retain the ships—not to expedite their departure, or aid their entrance into the port. The adjacent wharfs and piers, at that busiest, because the most available, season of the tide, called emphatically the “top of high water,” are generally crowded with spectators, composed either of persons eagerly watching the arrival of long looked-for friends—or bidding an adieu to those who are departing; or, finally, of that large majority of idlers, who, having no precise business anywhere, are attracted, unconsciously, by the inherent beauty and interest of this ever-varying scene, and who, without having either taste or knowledge enough to analyse their feelings, are yet moved by what is so essentially picturesque, that the dullest senses are made to feel its charm.

Nor is this a scene which palls on the observation, for it is scarcely possible that we shall discover it to be alike on any two days of the year. On one day there may be either a faint breeze, or

a dead calm. The vessels, in that case, drop out gently to sea, with the first turn of the ebb—while others enter the harbour with the last drain of flood—each being aided by a little tiny boat, connected with its parent bark by a cord, alternately dipping in the water, and jerked out of it, as the seamen, with a loud huzza, strain their backs to the oar. Or it may happen, that an entering or departing ship is drawn along by a rope, or warp, as it is called, kept as tight as a rod of iron by fifty or a hundred hands, lining the long projecting pier, at the end of which stands the lighthouse—that lighthouse of which in the bright blaze of sunshine it has been satirically remarked, we take no more note than of a friend whose assistance we require no longer; though it probably crosses the recollection of some of the more reflecting of the spectators, that the time has been when, in a dark and stormy night, a single glimpse of this now neglected beacon was held worth a ship load of silver!

On such a fine day as I am supposing, dozens, or even hundreds, of ships and vessels of various sizes and descriptions, from all the mercantile nations of the earth, are seen jostling one another, dropping out, or dropping in, towing, warping, sailing, steaming, on their different courses, “a mighty maze but not without a plan.” Even to inexpe-

rienced observation this apparent mass of confusion is very pleasing, though to such it must seem as inexplicable and beyond control, as that of the planetary movements, or the vagaries of the moon, which all admire, though few understand.

When, however, there happens to be a brisk wind blowing, the scene is totally different. The elements now meet in opposition, for the wind, instead of slumbering as before, and letting the silent tide have its own placid way, is roused up, and having set itself against the current, sorely puzzles, but rarely baffles entirely, the skill of the seaman. Then it is, that the talents and local knowledge of the pilots, and the hardy intrepidity of the captains, come into play; and men who in the calm of the day before we should not have discovered to be much above their fellows in courage or capacity, now claim their due superiority. At such moments the commander is cheerfully and even eagerly obeyed by those very men who, in the pride of ignorance, and the presumption of security, were far less docile in the calm.

If we watch a ship coming in, we shall see the anchor all ready to let go—the cables ranged along the deck—the leadsman in the chains taking cast after cast as briskly as he can, and singing out the soundings to the anxious pilot, as the harbour's mouth is neared. On entering it, the tacks become shorter,

and are made with more smartness. The helm is put down quickly, the head sheets let fly in a moment, and about she comes ! The yards spin round, ropes crack, and sails shake, as if the whole machinery of seamanship was going to pieces. As she heels to the gale, under the unrestrained leverage of the masts, the old ship creaks from stem to stern, by the friction of the timbers and beams against one another, and to shore-going senses it would seem that the danger was great. But if we now take notice of the weather-wise glance of the pilot's eye, or mark the tranquil deportment of the captain by his side, or observe the cheery laugh of the dripping crew, as the waves curl or break over them, we shall understand, although we cannot tell how, that in the midst of what seems tumult, and hazard, and difficulty, all is order and safety. Thus at moments when in our ignorance we fancy the vessel is to be driven against the rocks ; or absorbed by the seas, as she gradually forces her way in or out of the harbour, we discover that the people most concerned know that all danger is past, and are chatting, at their ease, about indifferent matters !

Instead of a whole squadron of great ships, and a mosquito fleet of small craft, coming and going, when the weather was fine, and the sea smooth, we now detect only one or two of the sturdiest

class, venturing to face the gale, and urged by competition, or the love of gain, in some of its multifarious shapes, determined, at all risks, to commence their voyage. Or we spy in the distance, returning to its native port, a white sail, well bleached by the alternate sun and rain of many a tropical day. To the unaccustomed eye it is nothing but a pleasing spot of light, relieving the black, angry sky behind; but to the anxious ken of the merchant, whose soul is afloat, it tells another story. He sees in his richly-freighted argosie in the offing the cent per cent of well-directed enterprise; and as his darling ship re-enters the port, cheered on her way by the joyous shouts of a thousand welcomes, the grateful owner blesses his lucky stars, and as he returns the hardy captain's salute he applauds his own discrimination in having selected so fitting a commander to conduct his distant adventure.

The weather-beaten ship herself, dashing past like a meteor, enters the harbour, before the wind, and is soon tightly lashed, in security, after all her perils, by the side of her master's warehouse. Careless observers may contrast, to her disparagement, her battered appearance—her dirty, grass-grown sides, spliced ropes, and threadbare and many-patched sails, worn thin and white by long use—with the smartly-painted hulls, the stiff and

gummy canvas, the well-tarred shrouds and unstretched cordage, of the departing ships. But all these—though scarcely noticed by the uninitiated—being characteristic marks of protracted hard work, are respected by all those to whom the scenes with which they are associated are familiar, and bring back a thousand hardships, as well as joys, to a sailor's mind.

In like manner, the well-tanned countenance of the experienced commander, and the iron grasp of his rope-worn fist, are right welcome to the grateful "owner," who receives his officer not as a servant, but as a friend, when he leaps to the shore, and reports that he has made a successful voyage. The anxieties of both parties—the hazards of the voyage, the doubts, the delays, the difficulties—so painful at the moment, are so no longer, but, on the contrary, furnish topics for the most delightful converse—and mutual congratulation.

Such are one or two of the thousand scenes which a tide-harbour, such as Leith or Dieppe, presents at high water; but when the tide has ebbed out a very different set of objects strikes the eye. Almost all the picturesque beauty of the spot is gone. The beautiful, overflowing basin is now a huge and almost empty trough, for the only water which can be discovered is a slender, dirty stream,

struggling through a meadow of mud. The shipping, instead of riding triumphantly, like "things of life," on the bosom of the sea, and casting their reflected images deep into the tide, are now flung about at random; and instead of pointing their tall masts to the sky, like so many gothic spires, are inclined over at every angle to the horizon. Some are fairly laid prostrate on their beam ends; others thrown out of the perpendicular, like the trees of an American forest after a hurricane; all of them seeming more or less deranged from the naturally erect position, and sticking, as if ashamed of themselves, in a bed of silt; there, all sailorless, and disconsolate, the poor ships lie, as if they were nothing but wrecks, rotting, and useless, in the dirty, sludgy, impassable slime. The pretty little boats, which an hour or two before skimmed merrily from side to side of the harbour, are now half buried in the mud, with their noses down, their sterns up, their oars tumbled about, the rudders unshipped.

The only visible living things at this dead season, are a few wretched, amphibious-looking personages, "mud-larks," as they are emphatically called—booted to the thigh, struggling like flies in a glue-pot, knee-deep in the silt, in the dirty hope of picking up bits of cordage or other scraps of stores dropped from the ships. All is now silence, both on ship-board and on the shore, for as most

of the vessels cannot be reached, the wearied seamen profit by the occasion, and go to rest, while the process of loading and unloading is intermitted. At such times, too, the usual groups of idle spectators, even if there were anything to look at, would be deterred from approaching the spot by the offensive vapours, which the heat of the sun sends up from the horrid accumulation of dirt in the waterless harbour.

To remedy this last evil in some degree, and also to prevent the port from being choked up and rendered useless by the diurnal deposits of sediment, an ingenious, and very effectual means has been devised in many tide harbours for scouring out these troublesome and noxious accumulations. I am acquainted with no place in which this operation is more completely performed than at Dieppe; and as the usual delay about passports, when I visited that port, left us with time enough on our hands, we had an opportunity of seeing one of the most striking sights I ever witnessed.

Contiguous to the upper part of the harbour lies an extensive sheet of water, several miles in length, and of considerable depth. The surface of this artificial lake is about fifteen or twenty feet above the bottom of the harbour when the tide is out. At the top of high water the surface of the lake is flush with that of the sea, which then fills up the harbour,

and the intermediate gates being thrown open, a free communication takes place between the two. Before the tide begins to ebb, however, the communication is cut off by closing the triple set of very strong double flood-gates.

When the proper moment arrives, that is to say, when the tide has ebbed completely out, and left the harbour dry, or, to speak more correctly, left its bed covered with a thick coating of mud, the bolts are withdrawn, the whole six gates fly open, and the water from the lake gushes in a prodigious torrent right into the empty basin. At first the torrent falls with a head of more than a dozen feet, which gradually becomes lower as it spreads to the right and left on its way to the sea. In its impetuous course it not only sweeps away the mud, sand, and every other deposit, but, what has a curious effect, it sets all the boats, and many of the minor class of vessels afloat again, twirling them round and round in its vortices, and for a time, but for the turbid nature of the flood, might promise to restore some of its former beauty to the scene.

The only thing I remember to have seen which at all resembles this artificial gush of water, was at those places called "crevasses," in Louisiana, and the other half-drowned districts of the Delta, where the mighty Mississippi, swollen to within an inch or two of the top of its "levée," breaks through

that frail embankment, and pouring in a furious stream about as high as that I have been describing at Dieppe, but a hundred times as broad, threatens to deluge the adjacent country, the level of which, when the "freshets are out," that is when the river is swollen, is, in most parts of that alluvial region, considerably below the surface of the stream.

It seems worthy of remark, that, while the lake at Dieppe was lowered about half a foot in a quarter of an hour by the efflux of water on opening the gates, the gigantic Mississippi, though tapped by several enormous crevasses, each one of which allowed a volume of water to escape, larger than most European rivers, was not, in the smallest perceptible degree, lowered in its level!

CHAPTER II.

THE LACQUAIS DE PLACE, THE DUBASH, AND THE
CAPTAIN'S STEWARD.

THERE are certain things without which it is impossible to get on in this world, however inconvenient we may occasionally find them. Is there any lady or gentleman alive, for example, who can do without a servant? any captain of a ship who can do without a steward? any traveller who can do without a lacquais de place? And yet how fertile in vexation are these important sources of our comfort!

I have seen the despotisms of the East, but it is a very different thing merely to see a despotism, and to live under its regime; I have also seen, and for a short time lived under, the very different, but still more disagreeable "despotism of the majority" in the West, the tyrants of which make the iron enter into the souls of the minority. But until I visited the continent of Europe, and learned by dire experience what it was to fall under the dominion of

a “*lacquais de place*,” I found that I had formed but a faint conception of the miseries of absolute government, monarchical or democratical.

“Knowledge is power,” says the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, and I suppose, *per contra*, that ignorance is weakness. At all events, when a raw stranger comes to Paris, Venice, or Rome, of which he knows nothing, he must either trust to the road-books, which all mislead, or to his friends, who all bore him, or succumb at once under the authority of his “*lacquais de place*.” The aforesaid road-books, besides being very incomplete guides, are always dreary affairs to trust to in such a research; and as friends who will run about cheerfully to show us the sights, in any style of moderation, are seldom to be met with, we must in most cases resign ourselves, not, of course, without many a sigh, into the merciless hands of some fellow, who, without one atom of taste, or any true knowledge of what he is talking about, has made himself acquainted with the mere names of the artists whose works you are looking at. So far as this goes, he can help your judgment in the selection of objects to admire; but, then, what a sacrifice of comfort you are called upon to make for this poor return! Your tyrant, who leads you less than he drives you, will let you look at no pictures in the

order you wish, nor view them in the position you like best. You must take them as he directs, view them from the point he directs, and you must praise or blame them as he directs. It signifies nothing to say you will not attend to his injunctions or commands ; and that you will view only such and such pictures, and view them from the positions, and in the order, you judge best. For the plague is, that your cicerone is almost always in the right, and thus you find out, after battling with him for half an hour, and losing your time and temper, that the lacquais has the best of it, and that you would have done more wisely to have obeyed his orders, and taken up at first the position he pointed out, and submitted to view the pictures in the order he had suggested !

We forget, all this time, that the business of a cicerone is not really to know anything of the art of painting, or of placing pictures, but to make himself acquainted with the names of the artists who executed them, and to learn what are their respective merits, in the estimation of competent judges. This knowledge it is his business to bestow, secondhand, upon the bears and blockheads whom he is hired to lead, and who have had no time, nor opportunity, nor, mayhap, capacity, either to obtain this information for themselves, or to learn it from persons qualified to form a just

opinion. In our eager desire to get over the ground to see a certain number of pictures and statues in a given time, we take no note of all this, and see nothing in our lacquais but an ignorant domestic, who takes upon himself to lecture us on points of high taste, and to pronounce on works of the most refined art, as if he really understood their merits ! This, coupled with our own imperfectly felt ignorance, is, no doubt, the cause of our feeling so impatient under such dictation. It is all very unreasonable, I grant, but this does not mend the matter, indeed, makes it worse ; for I do not think I have seen any one, above the level of a mere cockney, who travels solely to *say* that he has travelled, who did not feel the agony of a lacquais de place as one of the sharpest drawbacks to the pleasure of rambolling about the world. It is well known, also, to those who have tried the experiment, that even the simplest things are hard to learn if we work at them by proxy, and not for ourselves. On coming to a town, for instance, if, instead of roving about on foot, we take a carriage and drive through it, we shall never learn the streets. This holds true in the great as well as in the small matters of a tour, and is especially applicable to sight-seeing ; for if we take all our “lacquais de place” says for gospel, as we are too apt to do, we shall return to

the place from whence we came about as empty-headed as when we set out.

I have sometimes thought that the queer advertisements, or puffs, of the hotels on the continent, written in English words by persons ignorant of the language, give not a bad notion of the sort of information respecting lodgings which the lectures of such a guide as I have been alluding to give of pictures and statues. The following is a fair specimen of these productions:—

“Hotel at the Cross of Malta, keeper by James Migliavacca.

“This inn, one of the most ancient in the town, on the place named San Sepolero, No. 5293, in a most advantageous and convenient situation for the nearness of theatres and other public establishments, is newly remounted and furnished.

“It is divided in great and little apartments, but there are likewise single chambers to be let, the whole cleanly and fashionably furnished. The inn-keeper has nothing neglected by reuniting in his establishment all the accommodations that by travelling gentlemen may be desired; as, bathes every hour of the day, being there always a coach for their dispositions to make excursions. A scrupulous attention exercised by waiting the foreigners, united in procuring all what can be agreeable to

them, may induce the most honourable travellers to call for this house, by means of which the innkeeper hopes to acquire and deserve the general trust and confidence. In this hotel shall be served every day a Table-d'hôte, with the greatest cleanliness and well ordered, surely to the satisfaction of every guest."

The above is a literal copy of the advertisement of an Italian hotel-keeper, whose meaning is plain enough throughout, as indeed it generally is in such cases, however ludicrous the diction may be. In the collection I have made of such things, however, I find the following curious production, written by an Indian Dubash, or head servant, to his master who held an official situation on the Madras Presidency, in which it is scarcely possible to catch even the glimpse of an idea. The object of the dubash, as I understood from other sources, was to obtain some small indulgence for his family, and thus he writes:—

"My ever reputable sir,

"Withall respectfully begs Master majesty's excessive excellent goodness exist the nature of best lucidity auspicious adorned generousful presence of protection the poor native writer's as equal qualification of the sun and moon, both shines for the safety of the world!

"Servant being happy to be able to request that

servantuncle have adviced to visit Master's auspicious powerful presence, same moment Master majesty's full dulcet ambrosia smile will be long mercy, with excess affection as to provide a full bread for the protect of the poor families.

"Servant this day have acquired a very good fortune to efface the suffered misfortune as soon as servant have visited Master's gracious presence. Honored sir, that there is not great thing it is a trifle, rush, for Master majesty's presence, but that is a greatest sea, and plenty long considerable mountains for our poor part.

"Most humbly begs a pardon as to take these sentences into Master's glorious patience as to accomplish the servant wishes thereby the servant and parents families with little chिल्ds also our nearest relations, perpetual both prays the diurnally thrice that the Master majesty's powerful presence as our own generation, merciful Jehovah, as long as our generation is living in this world.

"Gracious sir, Master majesty's dutiful, affectionate, and humble servant,

"MADURNIAGE."

Widely different in all respects from either the "lacquais de place" of Paris or from the native dubash of Bangalore, is another description of serving-man, viz., the captain's steward, especially the captain of a man-of-war's steward.

Everybody knows, indeed, that the human race is now divided into three classes—men, women, and stewards of packets. Of men and women enough has been written—but surely the class of stewards demands a poet, and it is to be hoped that one will arise some day to sing them. In their way, they certainly are the most useful persons in existence. You may do very well, it has been alleged, without a captain, or a boatswain, or you might blunder along, as many folks do all their lives, without a pilot—but how could you possibly do on shipboard without a steward?

I had a steward once who accompanied me on many a long voyage, and who, had I not been unable to get a ship, might now have been alive, for in that case we never should have parted company. But ambition seized his mind, and when his master no longer required his services, wished to settle in life, to have the command of a house. So he took a wife, and bought the goodwill of a tavern. Now, though it be true that to command well one must learn to obey, it does not necessarily follow that he who knows well how to obey, and makes a very good figure in a subordinate situation, will succeed equally well when disengaged from that dependence under which he flourished. In other words, it is not certain that he who has made an excellent servant, will make as good a master—or

that a ship's steward, who, under the captain's eye, and guided as well as restrained by the established discipline of a man-of-war, might rise to the top of his class, would make a good shopkeeper, and still less that he would make a good landlord of a pot-house, the highest heaven of a serving-man's ambition.

My poor friend, for I always considered him as such, Henry Capewell, was bred to the sea, and made several voyages in China ships ; his genius, however, lay not aloft amongst the cordage, but in the steward line below. How we came together I forget ; but I soon found that he was a man of great resource, and not only never made a difficulty himself, but never failed to overcome those made by others. He was civil, modest, cheerful ; always at his post ; always doing just the right thing, at the right time, and in the right way. He seemed really to love his business, and all its concerns ; he did not merely attend to the jog-trot routine and technicalities of his office, but made it his business to discover and study the wishes of his master in all things. For example, I was perpetually discovering that he had done many small, though at times important, acts of kindness to the ship's company under my orders, for all which I alone probably got credit.

I remember an instance when we had been at sea for many months, on a long voyage,

which took us quite out of the way of almost every kind of supply; and though the officers are always anxious to do what they can on such occasions to render the situation of the men less uncomfortable than it would otherwise become, it is only those who are much with them, and actually see their wants, who can form a just estimate of the best mode of helping them. It will easily be understood by those who have kept house, that, in circumstances where there are no crockery-ware shops to apply to, and where the ship is exposed to tempestuous weather, the cups and bowls, and such-like articles, are gradually reduced to a most inconvenient degree of paucity. Having suffered severely as a midshipman from this privation in the dish and plate line, I can speak with confidence of its annoyance, and I hope those who have never been reduced to the necessity of drinking wine out of a teacup, or tea out of a wine-glass, will take my word for its being rather disagreeable.

My poor fellows had scarcely a basin amongst them to drink their cocoa out of, and it occurred to my steward that he could supply the deficiency without trenching on my stores, which, under the wasting influence of a long voyage, were gradually breaking away, and sinking in the ocean, after the manner in which the cliffs of the east coast of England

and other parts of the world are crumbling away. I had laid in a considerable stock of the preserved meats, prepared by Messrs. Donkin, Hall, and Gamble (though the invention is strictly due to Mons. Apert, a Frenchman), and I never thought of or asked what had become of the numerous empty tin cases in which the meats, soups, and milk, had been enclosed. Capewell, however, as fast as the cases were emptied, in conjunction with the armourer, had formed each of them into a neat, useful, and, above all, an unbreakable bowl; so that in process of time each mess was provided with several admirable substitutes for their demolished crockery. I happened to make some remark, in passing round the decks, on the uncommonly neat appearance of the shelves, on each of which stood several of the old cases, and I then found that the captain had got credit all along for a degree of consideration due strictly to his steward.

I have mentioned that my man was full of resources; but there are limits even to the resources of a captain's steward, for it is next to impossible to make a good dinner when there are no provisions wherewith to furnish it. It was exactly, however, upon such occasions of extreme distress that Harry Capewell's genius shone forth in that most valuable of all human arts—making the most of things.

On my return from China, viâ Loo Choo, Ma-

nilla, and India, in 1817, I had called at St. Helena, where I expected to have fitted up my stock of provisions; but the admiral could not spare me more than a small portion, and I sailed with a quantity barely sufficient to have supplied us, at full allowance, for the usual passage. I ought, of course, to have put the whole crew, officers included, upon a reduced allowance at once, but I miscalculated the time, and omitted to do so for some weeks, and then only when the wind came against us. The gale freshened from the east, and we were kept much longer at sea than we had reckoned upon, so that our daily share in the cabin became a very small matter indeed. This arose from my having a friend with me, an officer of the army in India, and who of course was not on the books; besides my old friend and companion during all the voyage, Lieutenant Clifford of the navy. In extremity, of course, these gentlemen must have been supplied from our scanty stock, but as long as any portion of my own extra supply was extant I felt bound to keep to that.

Poor Capewell, whose chief pride and glory it was to put a good dinner on table every day, was driven to the very end of his wits, and long after all the true substance of a dinner was gone, this clever fellow maintained the appearance, and in spite of Shakspeare's authority helped to cloy the

hungry edge of appetite, by the bare imagination of a feast. Every day at three o'clock, the captain's dinner hour, the steward, as usual, was seen to mount the quarter-deck ladder, and coming up to us announced with the most perfect gravity, that dinner was ready. Down we went, and there, to be sure, we saw before us every outward semblance of a regular meal. The cloth carefully spread, with never fewer than four dishes on the table, all covered, and everything shining, as it was wont, as bright as silver. When all the party were seated, the steward advanced to remove the covers from the dishes, and we thought we could discover about the corners of his mouth the dawn of a jest, which, however, never turned to day—first, because he knew too well the duties of his station ; and next, because the matter was altogether too serious for his sense of mirth. It may be supposed, that it was an equally serious matter for us ; but we laughed heartily notwithstanding, when the first cover being removed there came into view about six ounces of salt mess pork ; and under the next, a saucer full of boiled ship's peas.—These formed the top and bottom dishes. At the sides lay four miserable potatoes in one dish, and in the other two sea biscuits, soaked, cut in halves, and dressed with pepper and salt on the gridiron. And this formed our whole dinner !

My old steward and I had many curious adventures together during the cruises we made in South America, when that country was brought into such a state of revolutionary turbulence, that it required the utmost address to carry on any kind of business at all. Even the ordinary marketing operations were often fraught with difficulty, and sometimes with danger, as the enraged and hungry populace were apt, like the mobs of other countries, to ascribe their sufferings to persons in office, or to anything rather than to their own folly. Capewell, however, appeared to care little for all this bustle—for nothing put him out of his way—and, whatever I heard from others, it was never from him that I discovered there was any difficulty. Even when we came to China, Manilla, and other countries, of which he knew not one word of the language, he contrived to make all his bargains with an advantage which even the native servants could scarcely reach.

I remember once at Canton, being so much surprised at the success with which he filled his basket, and at the smallness of the cost, that I said,—

“Capewell, how is it that you contrive to make these fellows understand you? I can’t get them to comprehend a word I say, and yet you manage not only to get meat, vegetables, and fruit, at the proper prices, but you count out the clothes, send

them to the wash, and always get the proper number back again, while I see others fighting and squabbling in the market, and hear every one else complaining of lost shirts and torn pocket-handkerchiefs?"

His only answer was, as he shifted a parcel of dollars from one hand to the other, "I never hurry them, sir."

Had I continued afloat he never would have left my service, I am sure; but the very small quantity of employment which I furnished him withal, when I was living on shore as a bachelor, was so inadequate to occupy his active spirit, that he became listless from sheer want of business, and after a time, as I have mentioned, he married, set up a public-house in London, and though he succeeded very well he always sighed for the congenial atmosphere of the wide ocean. Every time I saw him afterwards he asked me, with a sigh, what hopes I had of getting a ship? As time drew on, and he saw younger and more active officers employed in those walks of the service in which he had hoped to have once more accompanied me, in the roving, buccaneering sort of life, which we both loved, he pined and died, I verily believe, for want of sea air.

I must not dismiss my faithful servant, however, without relating a characteristic anecdote

of his activity and resource. A near relation of mine, living in Edinburgh, had under her care a young lady of thirteen or fourteen years of age, whose mother being at St. Helena wished to have her daughter sent out to her. After the correspondence and trouble usual in such cases, a proper governess was found to go out with the young lady; but a difficulty arose as to further accompaniments, since none of the gentlemen of the family could conveniently go so far, and there seemed a necessity, or at all events a high expediency, for some male personage to accompany the two females. This knotty matter was discussed a good deal, till at last an idea struck me suddenly, and I said, "Why not send my trusty steward, Capewell, with the governess and her charge; I know no gentleman of my acquaintance, nor indeed any other person, male or female, who is so much at home on board ship, or who will be more likely to be really useful on this occasion."

They all laughed at this proposition, but the man being summoned to the drawing-room we propounded the matter to him, by asking him if he would go.

"Oh yes, sir, of course, if you wish it; I'll do my best."

"Well," said I, "I expected you to agree to

the plan. But how soon do you think you can be ready?"

He paused a little; and then, scratching his head, and shifting his weight, sailor-fashion, from one foot to the other, he replied, "As it is some way off, sir, I should like to have till to-morrow morning!"

When Capewell went down stairs he called the servants round him, and, to their great amusement and edification, cried out, "Well! here have I been a sailor for twenty years, and now I am turned lady's-maid!"

True to his word, he was ready, and started next day, at the time named, for London; found out a store-ship about to sail for St. Helena; went to the India-house, and having obtained the usual licence, and all the other necessary papers, proceeded on board, and secured a cabin in the ship. He then selected and bought neat furniture, and had everything in readiness for the ladies by the time they came to town. From the wharf where they landed he carried them to their ship, installed them in their cabin, and afterwards conveyed them on shore to a lodging, where he waited upon them till it was time to embark, and away they sailed.

After an unusually short interval, and almost before I thought he and his party could have well crossed the equator, I was astonished to see

my man again in Edinburgh. I hailed him with joyful surprise at his speedy return, but he appeared so totally unconscious of having been engaged in anything remarkable, that he came up to me in his usual quiet way, and touching his hat, just as he used to do after executing some ordinary ship's duty, said, "I am come back, sir, from St. Helena, where I gave up charge of the ladies, as you desired. Here's a letter from them, sir." And turning about, he proceeded to brush shoes and clean coats, as before.

Shortly afterwards, to my steward's infinite delight, I got command of a ship on the South American station, where, as I had passengers by the dozen, of both sexes, my worthy steward's new qualifications as a lady's-maid came into frequent requisition. Indeed, had I not been thus ably assisted, I should often have found my company a great bore, instead of a great amusement; for almost the whole time of my stay in those countries was a period of much professional anxiety, during which the minor but essential details of house-keeping, had they not been thus taken entirely off my hands, would have proved a serious interruption to business.

CHAPTER III.

A CHAPTER ON ETIQUETTES.

PHYSIOLOGISTS, comparative anatomists, and others who have speculated on animal life, are perplexed to decide what is the exact ratio between the physical dimensions and the moral capacities of the different beings which live, and move, and have their being on earth. People who have resided much between the tropics, and still more those who have travelled in the swamps of Upper Canada, declare that in the power of tormenting, the mosquito beats all other created beings. I do not know how this may be, especially as I have observed that people generally fix upon that animal as being the most powerful in this respect, which happens to be plaguing them at the moment. One thing, at all events, is clear, namely, that the pain arising from any mishap or disappointment in life must not be measured by the nominal magnitude of the cause. For example, no one who has been exposed to the mortification occasioned by a

breach of the established etiquettes at court, or even in a private house, a ball-room, or anywhere else, will hesitate to rank its annoyance amongst the chief of those minor ills which ruffle the surface of the great ocean of our lives.

When I was at Paris some years ago, a few months before the “glorious days of July,” as they are facetiously called, I had the honour to receive an invitation to a ball at the Château of the Tuileries, given by the Duchess of Berri. As I was but little skilled in the etiquettes of the palace, I set about inquiring as to what points of dress must be particularly attended to, and I learned, somewhat to my dismay, that it was a positive rule, “une affaire de rigueur,” that no one could enter the ball-room except “en culottes,” which being literally and coarsely interpreted means that no one would be admitted “without breeches!” It was not likely, indeed, that any English gentleman would imitate the Highland chief who astonished and shocked the inhabitants of Cadiz by going to a ball in his native costume; or, as the Spaniards said, “casi en la palada;” but no one, be his rank what it might, was entitled to appear at the royal parties in loose trousers—albeit the most comfortable, though the most undressy, of all habiliments. Be this as it may, the order against the admission of “sans culottes” could not have been

more positive in the case of those redoubtable revolutionary worthies, who from necessity, as well as choice, bore that opprobrious title, than it was in that of such innocent foreigners as myself.

I had nothing for it, of course, than to hie me to my tailor, and have the fitting measurements taken. I explained the importance of the occasion, and as I glorified myself not a little, in the artiste's presence, on my invitation to the most *recherché* party in Paris, so he promised, on his honour, that the indispensable inexpressibles would be ready by six o'clock, at latest, on the day named in the Duchess de Gontaut's note. There was nothing remarkable in the tailor's promise, but certainly it was remarkable that I believed it, in spite of the accumulated experience of all past ages, from the hour that our first parents took to rigging their persons in fig-leaves down to the period I speak of, when the elder branch of the Bourbons appeared, to ordinary eyes, to be as firmly seated on the throne, as poor Adam and Eve believed for certain that they held the life-rent of Paradise. Let that pass—the breeches came not in time! Who ever thought they would?—not surely the faithless tailor, faithful only to his professional instinct of lying in such matters. But the curious thing was, that setting all history at nought I went out to dinner with an easy conscience, and no more doubting that by the time I returned on

my way to the ball I should find my dress ready, than if the promise had been made by the whole instead of the ninth part of a man.

Six o'clock was the hour specified by the faithless cabbager of cloth; I reckoned on eight, but when nine came, and no word of small-clothes, I went to the culprit, and blew him up much in the fashion of Petruchio, except that my anger was real, his only the semblance. The tailor's coolness only "stoked the fire," as the engineers say, of my impatience, and I motioned him from my presence with the air of Kean enacting Richard. No policy could be worse, considering the tenderness of the part in which the wretch had it in his power to wound me. I should rather have talked gently to him, flattered him about his art, and even gone with him to the room where I began to suspect his fellow-labourers in the art of lying were only now shaping out the cause of my lost peace of mind.

I returned to the hotel, and after a certain time spent in imprecations as harmless to the tailor as they were ridiculous and useless, or culpable, in me, I suddenly bethought me of an excellent stratagem, and sent M. Real, my accomplished "laquais-de-place," to learn from the master tailor I had been speaking to, who was an Englishman, the address of the actual individual into whose hands the article

of dress in such request had been entrusted to finish; my purpose being to drive to the spot, and while the lady whom I was to escort to the ball should sit in the carriage, I might mount to the high-top-gallant of my hopes, the aforesaid tailor's residence, and there wait till the last stitch was made, and dress myself in them accordingly, without the loss of the time it would cost to thread a needle. After considerable delay, an answer was brought, "that the person to whom the inexpressibles had been turned over to complete, lived 'au cinquième' in the Rue Traversière, 'numero'" I forget what, but certainly in one of the least decent or respectable streets in the capital. The tailor added a message expressive of a hope that Monsieur le Capitaine would never think of climbing up five pairs of stairs at that hour of the night. They knew little of the energies of a man-of-war's-man, stimulated by a pursuit so noble as a pair of tights; and away we drove. "Now," cried I, triumphantly, "as I am all rigged excepting in that particular article of dress which forms one of the chief characteristic distinctions between man and the lower animals, though not always, it is alleged, between man and woman,—I shall run up stairs, pull on these indefinables, and then reverse Buonaparte's saying, by stepping at once from the ridiculous to the sublime—from the Rue Traver-

sière to the Château of the Tuileries—from the house of a tailor to the House of a Bourbon !

Away I went, chuckling at my own cleverness ; but with hopes a little damped by entering one of the darkest and most cut-throat looking lanes I ever beheld, occupied evidently by the lowest kind of Parisian handicraftsmen. With some difficulty we found what was said to be the proper number, where, to the great surprise of sundry very ambiguous-looking damsels, I got out of the carriage. I ought, perhaps, to have mentioned before, that as the court etiquettes look after the heads as well as the tails of their company, the same rule required me to wear a cocked hat, which made my appearance still more conspicuous. The ladies, as true to the etiquettes of their alley as I wished to be to those of the palace, laughed outright, and made sundry sharp comments as I passed by them on my voyage of discovery to the upper regions.

“ I heard them, but I heeded not ; my thoughts
Were with my breeches, and they were far away ! ”

Alas ! alas ! No journeyman tailor under the name I sought for was known in those remote parts of the world. I sent my laquais Jean Real first up the street, then down, then to an adjacent traiteur's, then to a baker's, all in vain ! At length one of the fair nymphs before mentioned said she

would take compassion on me, and pointing to a stair opposite declared that the man we were looking for lived there, not au cinquième, but au troisième. In we dashed, Real ahead, the Captain following in his wake, with cocked hat braced fore and aft to offer less resistance to the wind. The navigation of the stair being rather difficult, it required the nicest steerage to avoid the numerous dangers in our way ; and verily, since the time I sailed among the coral reefs of the China seas, in the old *Lyra*, I had met with nothing more anxious in the way of night-work.

The people living at the troisième, at whose door we thundered pretty loudly, received us very gruffly, and bid us go higher. One sulky fellow, speaking from his bed, and angry at being disturbed out of his sleep, unceremoniously added that if we preferred the opposite course we might go lower than I choose to repeat "to ears polite." The stair had now become so narrow that I sent Real on alone, while I remained in midair, growling and confounding the whole race of tailors to a lower deep, if possible, than the fellow we had disturbed wished to send us. The laquais presently returned from his cruise aloft, in which he had not found the man, but in the research completely lost his own temper. His wrath, ostensibly aimed at the individual journeyman we were seeking for, was, in fact, directed

against me for employing an English tailor, when so many much better men, native born, and Paris bred, were to be found on the spot. Along with my laquais's national prejudices there was an obvious spice of truth in the fellow's sarcasm, which, in the testy mood I had been brought into, irritated me so much, that the dialogue which ensued in the middle of the dark staircase, if honestly committed to paper, would not be very creditable either to master or man. But certainly, on this occasion (as Playfair said of Dr. Hutton, in his angry controversy with De Luc), the honest laquais had least excuse, if most allowance, on the score of temper, is due to him who had the worst of the argument.

By the time, however, we again reached the street, which the treacherous ladies, who had purposely misdirected us, had abandoned in just apprehension of our joint rage, we had scolded one another into good-humour. This result was rather unusual, I confess, but the absurdity of master and man quarrelling, in such extremity of distress, had struck us both so forcibly, that we re-entered the lane laughing heartily.

A council of war was then held, as to the next course to be pursued, and it being decided that we should reconnoitre at the palace-gates, in order to learn whether or not any gentleman had gained admission "sans culottes," away we rumbled ac-

cordingly; while poor Real, who felt ten times more interested in the matter than I did, kept his eyes about him, in the hope of discovering the lost sheep. At the turn of the Rue St. Honoré, to the poor fellow's infinite joy, we overtook a man with a bundle under his arm, looking, as he took upon him to think, very like a tailor. In an instant, and never doubting that this was his man, he leaped off the box, and rushing up to the astonished individual clutched his bundle, and bawled into his ear,

“Are not you a tailor? Are not these the captain's breeches?”

“Tailleur! Culottes!” screamed the enraged Parisian. “Moi! que diable! Non—je ne suis pas tailleur!” and started off with an air of offended dignity quite worthy of the calling of which he seemed so unreasonably ashamed.

I might now have had my turn against Real, for the advantage he had gained over me in the battle of the staircase, but I felt too deeply the seriousness of the moment to waste my own energies, or to risk my man's temper, in ill-timed jests; so we jogged on again towards the château.

The well-bred footmen blazing in the royal liveries at the Duchess de Berri's had much ado to keep their countenance as we made our inquiries touching this delicate point of etiquette. They said

they had no positive orders, certainly, to stop any gentlemen dressed—or rather, as they said, undressed, in trousers—and that Monsieur le Capitaine, if he insisted upon it, must certainly be allowed to pass, but that he would be the only person who had gone to the ball so accoutred. This was decisive,—a sort of death knell to our hopes,—and away we turned with hearts very heavy, and feet very cold, for by this time the thermometer had sunk within a few degrees of zero of Fahrenheit.

It now occurred to me to call at the house of a brother officer to ask his assistance, but also he could not help me, and merely advised me to go in uniform; but as I had learned that there was to be no full dresses of any kind I should have been quite as much a mark for ridicule, and a victim of etiquettes, had I gone over-rigged, as if I had ventured in my present undress. I cannot sufficiently wonder that the very natural resource of applying to a masquerade shop did not occur to me sooner, for I might have been fitted in ten seconds with ten pairs of unmentionables, had I wished them, and have entered the ball-room as well fortified as any round-sterned ship of Sir Robert Seppings's build. The moment, however, this idea suggested itself, I pulled the check-string and was about to communicate it to my domestic, when I heard him shout-

ing at the top of his voice, “Voilà notre tailleur !” and sure enough there stood the foreman of the works himself, bareheaded, slipshod, and waistcoatless, brandishing the breeches on his outstretched arms, and taking as much merit to himself for coming to my help, literally at the eleventh hour, as if he and his master had not already broken their faith twenty deep already !

CHAPTER IV.

PARIS AT MIDSUMMER—IN WINTER—AND IN
SPRING.

THE French are beginning to imitate many English customs, and to aim at some of those comforts and luxuries, both in-doors and out-of-doors, which we have long considered as almost essential to our existence. We, on the other hand, modestly assume that we are already so perfect, that we have little or nothing to learn beyond the art of making a few dressed dishes, a poke bonnet or two, and as the spring advances a new and a fashionable gown. One thing more I think we might import with advantage into Kensington Gardens and St. James's and Hyde Parks, which is, the convenient custom of having chairs under the trees, as the French have them in the Tuileries Gardens and other places of public resort. I do not mean here and there a stray seat, but a whole army of chairs—twenty thousand if you please—so that all the world may sit down for a penny apiece. The

said Tuileries Gardens are, it must be admitted, quite perfect in all respects except two—viz., open space and green grass. Indeed, throughout the whole of the pleasure grounds of Paris, excepting only the gardens at Tivoli, there is not a blade of grass to refresh the eye, or yield relief to the scorched soles of the feet. Accordingly, in walking in any part of that capital in summer, we are often reminded of Milton's description of his hero treading over fields of burning marl. The poet, with his wonted boldness and originality, does not make his place of punishment dark ; on the contrary, I suspect he must have taken his idea of the infernal regions from having passed a week in Paris at Midsummer.

I have been roasted under the vertical sun of Calcutta, baked in the close land winds of Madras, and been boiled in the swampy vapours of Batavia, but no intertropical cooking I have ever experienced comes near to the dressing one gets in the month of July in Paris. In the narrow streets you are suffocated ; in the wide ones you are grilled alive ; or if you fly to the Champs Elysées you are speedily choked with dust. Within doors your rooms become more like kilns for drying grain, than apartments for living beings. If you shut out the light and heat, you expire for want of air ; but if, in agony, you open the creaking casement for a moment, you think the

“fierce blast of the Simoom” is coming in upon you. The vegetation being all withered up, the eye finds no repose, for the rays of the sun are reflected from every object upon which they fall, and every object being white it is impossible to look in any direction without being dazzled. The sky, no longer blue, is filled with a white, fiery sort of haze; while from the parched and cracked ground there arises a visible stream of liquid heat, an optical deception caused by the lower stratum of air in contact with the burning soil becoming lighter, and in consequence changing places with that above it, which, in its turn, pours down to the earth to be heated and raised up to supply red-hot breath to the panting inhabitants of the capital.

If the human inhabitants suffer at this rate, who have all the advantages of choice of place, dress, and occupation, what must be the condition of the wretched cattle of the city? I allude particularly to that most useful, but most unhappy of animals, —the hackney-coach horse; under which generic appellation may be included not only the higher classes which figure in regular jarvies, and may be called the aristocracy of the hackney-coach line, —but those which are condemned to the cruel and lumbering labour of the omnibuses, or to the rapid and restless misery of the cabs. Be this gradation of rank in sorrow as it may, we must

fairly pronounce one and all of these poor brutes the most unhappy of God's creatures. Every other description of living thing enjoys some interval of repose, and now and then a touch of good treatment; the hackney-coach horse has no respite from labour—no interval of kindness. The worse the weather, the more he is worked; the more rest he requires, the less he gets; the more he works, the more he is thumped! Be it day or night, or cold or wet, or hot or dusty, windy or calm, it is all alike to him, poor fellow! for every extreme brings with it an addition of labour. Moreover, in proportion as he is overworked, he is underfed; he is never dressed nor curry-combed like the rest of his species; a bucket of dirty water dashed in his face after having served to wash his own rickety coach wheels, forms his least disagreeable toilet. "From eve till morn—from morn till dewy eve," he is flogged without cessation, and without any mercy, for not doing that which he cannot perform; and when at last, with his withers wrung far beyond the stage of yielding blood, his ribs and back-bone basted till they well nigh escape from their tattered covering; his hoofs cut across by the stones, or driven to pieces by such frequent shoeing, that they have become, like a worn-out boat, nail-sick; his fetlocks swelled in mockery of his shrunk shanks; his knees disjoined, and his

eyesight gone, he dies, and is pitchforked on a dunghill—too essentially carrion to be given to the dogs ;—thus terminating a life of misery by a death of ignominy !

But if summer in Paris is bad for man and beast, winter is even less bearable ; at least the cold, which set in one winter I was there, was such as I never remember to have seen in England, Scotland, or anywhere else. It was not a good honest, bracing, moderate degree of cold, which you could temper out of doors by smart exercise, or subdue within by means of blazing fires. It seemed to defy every such device—being hard and dry, and so biting, merciless, and snarly, that there was no possibility of escaping its searching intensity. It subdued all mankind alike—natives and strangers—and at times entirely cleared the streets of people, leaving the capital like one of those mysteriously deserted cities in Hindustan described by travellers in the East, which, with all their palaces and temples complete, have been left for ages without a single inhabitant in them !

I walked once, the day after Christmas, from end to end of Paris, and literally met only a stray gendarme or two. The ice in the streets had become like stone in a quarry, and flew into powder on being broken. When this intense and excessive cold abated a little, the *traineaux* moved about as

if they were in Siberia ; while in the ordinary carriages the horses' feet were all so miserably ill-frosted, that they slid in the most pitiable way—an evil greatly aggravated by the form of the Parisian pavement. Owing to there being only one gutter in each street, and that in the centre, the carriages have at all times a tendency to be thrown towards the middle, by the sloping banks of pavement; but when ice and snow are on the ground the wheels slide down sidewise, almost as much as they advance in their proper direction, and thus, by the mathematical “resolution of forces,” they move in a diagonal course, or what in military movements is called “*en échelon*.” This result of the combined action of gravitation, and of the languid effort of worn-out horses, struggling along slippery streets, declining into a central gutter, would merely be laughable, if it were not at the same time rather dangerous by reason of the inevitable collisions which cannot be avoided in passing other similar vehicles, floundering along in the like hopeless, helpless, and crab-fashioned style of travelling.

How the wretched coachmen manage to live at all in such weather as I have seen in Paris, is to me inconceivable ; for even to the inside passengers the cold becomes at times so severe, that with all the contrivances they can think of—warm furs, hot-water bottles, great-coats, boat-cloaks, and

shawls, they can scarcely go from one house to another without being frozen to death,—a fate which actually befel two poor sentries, and an unfortunate donkey, one bitter night of the winter alluded to. The soldiers were found at the hour of their relief, as it is called, with their muskets shouldered, standing as stiff and erect at their post at the palace-gate, as when their corporal had planted them. The honest donkey was found standing across the path in the Boulevards at day-break, with his tail straight on end, as rigid as a bar! In his death the poor old fellow retained his wonted look of patience and contentment so completely, that the people, thinking him still alive, drubbed him soundly as they passed, for being in the way.

To return to the no less passive coachmen. One can understand how an English jarvey manages by reiterated pots of porter, and perhaps a glass or two of gin, to keep the cold out of his stomach; but how the French drivers contrive, without malt liquor or strong waters, to sit on their boxes at night, for two, three, four, or five hours on a stretch, apparently as insensible to the biting frost as if they were made of granite, and not of flesh and of blood, is utterly inconceivable. Still less is it comprehensible how their horses can stand, for so many hours together, with iron shoes on the

cold ice and stones of those sadly-mismanaged streets.

To comprehend fully the evils of the Paris pavement, it should be explained to those who have not been there, that there are very few drains of any kind in that great city; and none of those small lateral underground, but most important, conduits, which, in other cities, lead the waste waters from the houses to the main sewers. In consequence of this omission, these foul streams find their way as they best can across the pavement to the open central gutter before-mentioned. After traversing a distance of some hundred yards above ground, this filthy main current comes to a hole, and falls into the common sewer.

This is very well, or, at all events, not very bad, in fine weather; but when the nipping frosts come on, which freeze up Paris, these putrid waters are arrested in their course, the central gutter soon gets filled up with dirty ice, and as fresh inundations flow over, its surface gradually rises higher and higher, till, from being the lowest part of the street, it becomes the highest, presenting instead of a hollow valley a long ridge of dung-hill, from end to end. Each house also, it will be understood from this description, must necessarily have its own particular delta of frozen dirt before it, consisting, like those of the Rhone and Mississippi, of

all imaginable impurities. To add to this evil, which increases daily, indeed hourly, an occasional heavy fall of snow comes into play, and with it such a fresh accession of materials as renders the streets quite impassable for all but foot-passengers. Or if in the early stages of this accumulated mischief carriages do make their way along, the snow and ice pounded and mixed together by the wheels, and then firmly cemented by the introduction of freezing filthy water, form a mass so rugged, that presently no vehicles can move over it without risk of being shaken to pieces.

The police—apparently the only guardian angels of Paris—attack these new formations with some vigour, and by employing large bodies of the wretched workmen, who are thrown out of every other occupation by the severity of the season, they sometimes contrive by dint of absolute quarrying, to shape the solid ice into blocks, and have it carted away to the Boulevards, or to the banks of the river, according to which is nearest. Towards the end of the season—1829-30—the ice removed from the streets formed a continuous wall about ten or twelve feet high, and from twenty to thirty feet broad, for many miles. So long as the frost lasted, this did no harm; but owing to its immense mass, the ridge, like a glacier, continued, long after every other trace of winter was gone, to

send forth innumerable fetid streams as black as ink, both towards the walk on the Boulevards, and towards the streets.

The expense of removing the snow, and the ice accumulated from the freezing of the superficial drainage from the houses, amounted for a considerable number of weeks, during that year, to 17,000 francs; while the cost of carting it away, and piling it into the walls I have spoken of, was not much less. It has been asserted, and I believe with truth, that the cost of making underground drains, by which the greater part of the evils above described might be avoided, even if drains were adopted all over Paris, would not be more than two or three years' purchase of this vast outlay, rendered absolutely necessary by the execrable nuisance of masses of ice formed out of filthy water, and piles of sooty snow, acting alternately to block up the passage.

There is no doubt that interested persons might be found in Paris, and also influential, disinterested people, who would resist with all their might even this salutary improvement in the drainage of the city, on the score of its throwing out of employment several hundreds of persons who gain a livelihood by cutting away the ice in winter. At all events, it is well known that there have been several projects on foot for some years, having for

their object to supply Paris with water; but as the interests of the water-carriers have been more considered than those of the inhabitants at large, all, or nearly all the water used in that capital, only four years ago, was carried up-stairs on men's backs—and it may be so still—a specimen of barbarism more worthy of the ninth than the nineteenth century, and which may be taken as the *ne plus ultra* of what is called the protective system.

The following paragraph, taken from a Paris paper, dated January 15th 1830, is curious.

“The extra expense occasioned to the city of Paris for breaking and carrying away the ice from the streets and public places, was 150,000 francs (£6000) in January and February 1826. In the following year there was no winter; but in January, February, and March, 1829, the expense was 196,000 francs (£7840). The present severe weather began on the 6th of December, and the cold continuing to augment, and a great quantity of snow having fallen, no less a sum than 146,000 francs (£5840) was expended in three weeks alone for labour and transport in clearing away the ice.”

I learned afterwards that before that severe season (1829-30) was over, no less than £17,000 had been expended in clearing away the ice from the streets; and though of course a certain portion of this cost was inevitable, from being

caused by the heavy snow-storms; still it is the opinion of practical engineers, and other persons conversant with the economy of great cities, that with level streets, having two gutters or water-courses, one on each side above ground, and such a system of drains underneath that all the refuse water from the houses should flow along to the common sewer, without being exposed to the influence of the frost, by far the greater part of this immense and constantly recurring expenditure might be saved, and the streets be much less obstructed.

I remember in the extremity of my distress caused by the cold of Paris, hearing with a sort of malicious satisfaction from a Russian general officer, that the temperature of their northern winter, though often lower by the thermometer, is very seldom so piercing as that of Paris when it happens to be a severe winter. He also told me that when the cold reaches a certain point, a government order is issued at Petersburg forbidding all public parties. This is surely a wise order, and one which I, for my part, often devoutly wished had been in force at Paris during that bitterest of bitter winters which preceded the revolution of July.

When, at length, a thaw came, which was on the 20th of January, or about six weeks after the frost had set in, the whole city appeared to be sub-

merged. It commenced on one of the most miserable, raw, and comfortless days I ever witnessed. The surface of all the snow and ice, not only in the streets but on the house-tops, being suddenly converted into dirty water, the spouts gushed down upon the hapless passers by in a thousand cascades, varied only by an occasional, extended, sheet, or cataract, falling from the whole length of a roof, where the water overflowed the parapet, or where the spouts happened either to be choked up or proved too small to carry off laterally the unlooked-for supply. Meanwhile the gutters in the middle of the streets soon became so swollen with muddy water, islands of ice, and the refuse accumulated before the doors during the long frost, that it was really difficult at many places to get across at all. So great, indeed, was this difficulty, that men posted themselves at the most frequented thoroughfares; but instead of carrying brooms in their hands, as usual, these fellows provided themselves with long planks, of which they made bridges across the torrents — charging a couple of sous pontage. Well-bestowed money it was, for, without this civil engineering, many of the streets would have become—and even with it some of the most frequented ways did become—at last, totally unfordable. The omnibuses, coaches, and cabs, floundered along with their horses' bellies at times

touching the water, and flinging this sea of mud to the right and left, in the most fearful explosions; while the hapless and distracted foot-passengers had enough to do to escape being driven over, if the middle way was followed; or if they adhered to the side, and coasted along the walls, they were sure to be covered with dirt from head to foot. In addition to the misery of being thus splashed upon by the floundering cattle, the poor pedestrians were liable to get drenched to the skin by the countless and unavoidable “jets d’eau” from the house-tops, if they kept too close.

On the memorable day of this “mud-flood,” as it was called, I had set out to make sundry duty calls—a sufficiently severe task of itself at any time—but I found all the open courts, the covered “*porte cochères*,” and even some of the staircases, almost as much saturated as the submerged streets. In short, all Paris was cold, aguish, dreary, dark, and miserable. Such a day!

If the summer of Paris be of extra-tropical fierceness of heat, the winter of ultra-polar intensity of cold, and the intermediate period a deluge, the spring in like manner deals in extremes, and is well entitled to a word or two in such a chapter. No notion can be formed of the myriads of inhabitants which Paris contains, from what the eye beholds in summer and in winter;

but at the first blush of its genial and beautiful spring, the streets, the gardens, indeed every square foot of the surface, become so covered with crowds of both sexes in their gayest dresses that it looks as if the ground were converted into one vast flower-garden. It is true that in summer, even at its hottest and most sultry and breathless periods, there is almost always a multitude of persons out of doors, either defying the heat, or doomed to encounter it in search of their daily bread. But in a severe winter, as I have said, the streets are deserted, the public gardens a wilderness, and even the Palais Royal, and such-like covered places of resort, very scantily peopled, and only by persons hurrying along, well-furred, cloaked, and doubly-shod with wooden sabots, india-rubber shoes, or such other anti-dampers as the splashy nature of the streets, destitute of trottoirs, renders indispensable to health and comfort.

But when the merriest of merry springs burst forth, which it does suddenly, all the world of Paris rush out of doors, and remain out so perseveringly that one might think they lived in the streets and gardens. I have often thought how copious an index is furnished to the domestic misery they must suffer by being forcibly detained in-doors in winter, by contrasting it with the intense enjoyment of their out-of-doors spring. The Tuileries' Gardens, the

Champs Elysées, the Bois de Boulogne, and the Tivoli Gardens, are their chief places of resort. In the Palais Royal, too, along the whole circuit of the Boulevards, and in some other minor "places" or open spots, in the heart of the city, the Parisians congregate in the air, in thousands and tens of thousands. The men almost buried in piles of newspapers dimly seen through clouds of smoke from their segars, inhale each other's tobacco fumes, and interchange political prejudices with a degree of animation which, to the uninitiated, looks like quarrelling, but is merely what they call conversation. The women, clad with a degree of elegance of dress, are still further removed from the imitation of foreigners. They are generally ranged in groups under the trees, armed with their work, and thrice happy in the interchanged clatter of gossip which rings along the ground, emulating the chirping sounds of the merry birds among the leaves overhead.

Round their feet, under their tables, dodging amongst their chairs, or playing among the trees, swarm such a generation of noisy children as would defy fifty Malthuses on population to devise, or even to conceive, any "preventive check" for. Gaily as the mamas are dressed, the style in which the children are tricked out is often vastly more showy. I speak more of the fantastical man-

ner in which their hair is trimmed, than of their frocks and tippets; for the French, who are quite unrivalled in the dresses of grown-up women, scarcely yet understand how to rig their progeny. Some of the children are allowed to wear their hair in such volumes of curls as no savage would venture upon; others let it flow in a cataract of hair over their shoulders; while some coil it into ropes, like the tufts of the Chinese and Tartars. Hoops, skipping-ropes, hand-balls, foot-balls, and a hundred different species of the genus toy, are trundled about on the gravel on every side, for, alas! there is no grass to be seen. These carols are carried on under the languid sanction of clouds of coquettish nursery-maids, who generally congregate in the corners of the avenues, where by reason of the intersection of the cross walks, they can best command a raking fire of flirtation with the butterfly beaux, whose very heaven of enjoyment such a scene avowedly is.

The climate of Paris at this season is so perfect, and the attraction both of the sunshine and the shade so great, that every walk in the public gardens, however broad, every alley amongst the trees, however long, is filled with such solid columns of walkers, that the task of making way against the stream is about as hopeless as stemming a Canadian rapid. Every Parisian, in short, rich or poor, busy

or idle, seems to be living all day long in the open air; and as at this season all the flowers in their gardens and the leaves on their trees are running a similar race for new life and beauty, and the skies overhead consenting to the award, the animation and brilliancy of the Paris spring are complete.

It is at such a moment that an admirer of the French, wishing to show the people to advantage, would call a stranger's attention to them; and there can be no doubt that all these scenes are highly characteristic of the country. Still it is very difficult when viewing them to understand how it is possible that so gay, and apparently so light-hearted a people, could ever have been guilty of the grave excesses by which their history is so deeply stained. The mixture of manly individual energy, with the most wretched political servility in the aggregate—of the highest military daring and successes, with the wildest panics and defeats—of enthusiastic love of revolutionary liberty, with the warmest approbation of tyranny—of the most generous and fervent loyalty to one dynasty, with their no less cordial welcome of another, its antipode—are all features of national character very useful to be observed by the by-standers. This obvious truth has been so often repeated that it ceases to strike: yet it would, perhaps, be well for persons who have never been exposed to the same unfortunate trials as the French

have been, to pause before they condemn them as a nation.

It is also desirable, I suppose, that we should be so divested of prejudices in favour of our own country and against others, that we might judge fairly between them ; and without wilfully exaggerating matters (as I have perhaps done in speaking of the climate of Paris), view everything soberly. But as this appears to be an impossible case, the next best thing is to institute comparisons between them which shall serve the purpose of eliciting the truth when they are examined by impartial persons.

Now, although I profess no such impartiality, I still think it is possible to examine with fairness, and to record with fidelity, many incidents on both sides of the water capable of useful comparison, and calculated to develop by their details the true character of the people respectively, at moments of so much intrinsic interest as to make them forget conventional rules in the sincerity of their natural feelings.

This task I shall now attempt to execute, without any exaggeration, in one case, which I have selected from a great many. And here I may remark, that nothing is more false than to assert that mankind are everywhere alike. Climate, education, political condition, geographical position relatively to other countries, and various other modifiers

of the human character, are so influential, that the black and white colours of different nations are not more dissimilar than the moral features, even, of adjacent nations, differently circumstanced.

I am not sure that the comparison between England and France has ever been deliberately made the subject of specific treatment; but I am convinced that such a task, if duly executed, and in sufficient detail, would repay the trouble of the artist who should sketch it, and perhaps mutually instruct the sitters.

CHAPTER V.

THE GALLOWES AND THE GUILLOTINE.

IF we wish to study the national character of any people, we must consent to witness a good deal that is disagreeable, in order to see how they act under a variety of circumstances. And it is owing to this that those historical periods of every country which describe their revolutions, are so fertile in the best kind of instruction; for we then see them forced into action in cases entirely new to all the parties, and widely dissimilar to one another. But as such periods, fortunately, are rare, any person wishing to re-investigate the manners of a country for himself, must watch for opportunities when the people are likely to be so excited as to throw off those reserves which conceal the real character.

Thus the knowledge which we have of the Parisian population is generally derived from what we see in their salons, at the theatres, and at those public réunions which occur at the Institute, and at

the houses of distinguished men of science and letters, or in the parliamentary chambers. Few inquirers take the trouble to examine the hospitals, the prisons, or the schools, of Paris; though in all of these much curious and characteristic information is to be picked up. It is valuable, too, because it is of that kind which no description can adequately convey to persons who have not seen them. There are other scenes which fall within the range of useful description, but which cannot be narrated without giving some degree of pain; and as there are many readers who do not choose, even for the sake of information, to have their feelings harrowed up, or to risk having their taste shocked, I think it right to give warning to those whose nerves are sensitive, that what I am about to say relates to matters by no means agreeable.

I had long felt a great desire to compare together the methods adopted in England and France for executing criminals; for as I had heard much on both sides of the water which sounded like prejudice, the result of error, or misconception of the facts, I wished to see and judge for myself which of the two modes of carrying into effect the extreme sentence of the law was most likely to be attended with beneficial results to society. Probably some less defensible motives may have induced me to incur the pain of witnessing such scenes as were

necessary to the elucidation of the question above-mentioned; but, certainly, if any mere idle curiosity did enter into my motives, it was sufficiently corrected by the result, and I shall not be likely to seek a repetition of what I then felt, though I should be very unwilling to forget any part of the impression.

The opportunity which I availed myself of in England was the execution of Thistlewood and his associates, in 1820, for high treason, it having been their intention to assassinate the whole of the cabinet ministers. I took steps, the evening before, to secure a place so near the spot that I might not only see what was done, but hear what was said, and observe the effect produced as well on the sufferers as on the assembled multitude. Extensive preparations were made to preserve the peace, should any attempt occur to outrage it, or prevent any rescue, and likewise to guard against those accidents which had occurred on a previous occasion, by the pressure of the crowd towards the focus of interest. I had engaged a window in the house immediately opposite to the debtors' door at Newgate, before which, I was told, the scaffold was to be erected. The people of the house appeared to be well experienced in such melancholy scenes, and, I believe, habitually derived a revenue from their advantageous position lying close to the

spot where so many persons have expiated their crimes by the forfeiture of their lives. The mistress of the house advised me to send my servant in the evening of the day preceding the execution, to secure the window I had chosen, and recommended me to come with my friend not later than midnight. I did so accordingly, and was rather surprised to find a party of six or eight persons already in the room, on a similar errand. Half of these were ladies—women, at all events—and though for a time there remained a cold and formal reserve among us, as if all present felt rather ashamed of the purpose which had brought us together, we gradually fell into conversation, forgot where we were, and passed the time very agreeably.

The early dawn attracted us to our respective windows, where we could watch the gradual operations of curiosity on the inhabitants of the huge metropolis. During the interval between midnight and daylight, our thoughts were frequently recalled to the real tragedy about to be enacted by the loud ringing of the hammers used by the carpenters employed in fitting up the scaffold, though we could barely discover their operations by the indistinct light of lanterns. It was easy to see, however, that long habit, or, more probably, the instinct of business, had rendered this work, though pre-

paratory to a scene of the most awful kind, a matter of entire indifference to the workmen. Be this as it may, they talked and laughed with as little reserve, while adjusting the trap-door on which the unfortunate culprits were to make their last stand, as if they had been rigging up a stage for Pantaloon and Clown. To the left, towards St. Sepulchre's church, at intervals of about a hundred yards, other sets of workmen were no less busily employed, under the directions of the police, in erecting barriers across the streets, to divide the multitude into sections. This was done to confine the pressure, on the occasion of any sudden rush, to the masses of persons between barrier and barrier. The solidity of these cross-bars, and the manner in which they were fixed in the ground, gave testimony to the extent of the interest which the morning was expected to produce. Most of the poles consisted of the spars used for the scaffolding of houses; but the professional eye of my companion, a brother-officer, detected the topsail-yard and the top-gallant-mast of a ship, at a spot requiring the best description of spar, that is, at the inner edge of the crowd, and beyond which, as we afterwards saw, the police allowed no one to pass. Strong, slanting struts, or buttresses, of a still thicker scantling, were finally driven in at short intervals, opposite to the direction of the thrust, the lower

ends being placed in holes caused by removing several paving-stones, and the upper ends bolted to the cross-bars.

As the day began to break we could observe people streaming so fast from all the adjacent streets towards the fatal scene, that the workmen, though vehemently urged by the authorities to make haste, had enough to do to complete their preparations before the crowd were packed into a dense mass. It soon became generally known that during the night several regiments, both of cavalry and infantry, had been marched into the city, and were now stationed in the neighbourhood, but no one knew whereabouts. I looked out very sharply in all directions, but in vain, for some traces of this latent force. I only once saw something like an officer's uniform at a door-way not far off, when it was opened for a moment, to admit a messenger who arrived on horseback, and seemed to be well known to the police. Certainly no one in the crowd knew where the military were, or the amount of their force, though the impression was general that large bodies of troops were in readiness to act, if the mysterious, preventive influence they were now exerting should not prove a sufficient check to the turbulence of the multitude. Of any such tendency, however, there appeared no outward symptom among the crowd; whose demeanour, from first to

last, continued perfectly orderly and generally silent, with only such exceptions as I shall have occasion to point out in the sequel.

During the anxious time which elapsed between daylight and the appearance of the culprits, a low murmur of conversation could be heard, somewhat resembling that caused by the smallest kind of ripple along a sheltered beach, in a tropical climate, when the fitful puffs of the expiring land wind bring the sound with such varying distinctness to the ear, as to make it doubtful whether what we hear is caused by the rustling of the palm-tree leaves, or by the gentle working of the margin of the sea among the white, rough pebbles of a coral shore.

As the day advanced, the confidence with which we had talked to one another during the night was exchanged for a feverish kind of whispered communication, and a restless uncertainty of purpose. The women, especially, appeared ill at ease, and more than one of them expressed regret at having come, and a wish to get home again, if they could. That, however, was now quite out of the question. One or two of the gentlemen also seemed more than half disposed to cut and run, too, but this being impossible, by reason of the crowd, they set themselves to reassure the ladies, by attempts at light conversation, most painfully out of place and unsuc-

cessful. For my part, and that of my companion (a naval officer, too, who afterwards sailed more than half round the world with me), I must own that although I felt my pulse getting gradually quicker and quicker, and my face and hands occasionally flushing, I was so deeply interested in watching the progress of the various preparations, and in trying to scan the countenances of the front ranks of the multitude, and in observing the measures taken by the police to maintain order, that I felt not the slightest wish to retreat. On the contrary, my curiosity increased at every moment, so much so, indeed, that all the misgivings I had felt on the score of delicacy and propriety now melted away under the vehement excitement of the occasion.

As the fatal hour of eight approached, the sun, now at a pretty good altitude,—for it was May-day morning,—made many vain struggles to shine through the dense orange-coloured stratum of coal smoke resting between us and the clear sky overhead. The sounds of hammers on the scaffold, and of pickaxes at the barriers in the streets, gradually died away; the workmen disappeared; and nothing right or left could be seen but a compact mass of heads. On the house-tops also, and at all the windows, every foot of space was occupied by a human being, and yet so profound had the silence become at this moment of intense anxiety, that when we

shut our eyes, we might have supposed the streets deserted !

At a quarter before eight the bell of St. Sepulchre's church began to toll, and announced the near approach of the fatal period. All eyes were now directed to the debtors' door of Newgate, before which stood the platform connecting it with the scaffold, by this time covered with black cloth, strewn with saw-dust. The first objects which attracted notice were the executioner and his assistants, bringing out five coffins one after another, which they placed side by side under the gallows tree. At the head of the first coffin, destined no doubt to receive the body of the ringleader of the desperate gang, was placed a block of wood, to be used, as every one understood, at the ceremony of decapitation.

Just before the clock struck the last hour which these unfortunate men were ever doomed to hear, the Rev. Mr. Cotton, the ordinary of Newgate, slowly ascended the scaffold, reading the funeral service. Thistlewood immediately followed, mounting the scaffold with a perfectly firm step, and taking up the position assigned him by the executioner, at the end of his own coffin, looked slowly round, with a firm air, and a countenance unmarked by any agitation. His wrists appeared to be tightly bound together, and his elbows also were

tied to each other behind his back, in such a way that the cord formed a shelf, on which one end of the rope by which he was to be suspended was coiled, the other end, fashioned into a noose, being placed over his neck, bared to the shoulder for that purpose.

I held in my hand a small spyglass, with which, as we were quite close, I could detect the slightest change of expression in his countenance. The only thing, however, like emotion occurred when he first placed his foot on the scaffold. The sun at that instant had just become visible through the murky atmosphere, and he looked up to it with an expression of melancholy, as if he deplored that this was his last look of the light of day. He then turned towards the populace, among whom there arose a murmur—not loud, and of rather an ambiguous character. There was nothing in it of applause, still less of execration; but simply, as it struck me, the expression of surprise at the actual sight of a person who, for some time past, had occupied a great share of their thoughts. As it generally happens, also, on such occasions, that a latent apprehension exists that something may occur to interrupt or put off the ceremony, the assurance, given by the arrival of the principal person, that they were not to be disappointed, appeared to afford a sort of ferocious satisfaction to the crowd.

Some one exclaimed, from the roof of a house, "God bless you!" upon which Thistlewood bowed slightly, but the person who directed the arrangements, not approving of this kind of communication, turned him round, so that his back came towards Giltspur-street and his face towards the Old Bailey, where comparatively few people were collected; he made no resistance to this change of position, but spoke a few words, which we did not hear distinctly. He seemed to be apologising for not knowing how to behave in a situation so new to him. He never afterwards moved, except once or twice to look over his shoulder, when I could see his eye glancing from window to window, as if in the vague search of sympathy.

In judging of these unfortunate men, it ought to be borne in mind, that although they were most justly condemned to death, for their wicked designs against the king's government, they may have acted under the full persuasion of their objects being not only just, but highly patriotic. Many brave and good men have died on the scaffold for offences equally criminal, who have handed down to posterity names of enduring renown; so that, without seeking for one moment even to extenuate their crime, we may, without inconsistency, yield a certain degree of our sympathy to men so grievously

mistaken, but who believed they were sacrificed in a great and praiseworthy cause.

It is true that in the course of their proceedings, in the scuffle caused by their arrest, a policeman was killed ; and therefore, even had they not been convicted of high treason, they must have been found guilty of murder, and most justly executed for that crime. But this circumstance was what may be called accidental, and formed no part of their plan, which, it must be owned, was black enough, being no less than to subvert the government, by putting the cabinet ministers of the Crown to death ! Nevertheless, their crime, wicked and preposterous as it was, belonged to a class which, when the leaders are men of name and substance, is far removed in the estimation of the world from those which spring out of the base love of money, or the demoniacal impulses of revenge.

Accordingly, there can be no doubt that these condemned traitors were sustained in their manly bearing at their last moments, not merely by the conviction that their purposes, though frustrated, were strictly patriotic, but by the belief that they possessed, more or less, the commiseration of the assembled multitude.

In spite of all this, I do not suppose they had the least expectation of a rescue, or that their for-

itude was upheld by any such hope. On the contrary, it seemed to me that in every one of their countenances the marks of care, and of a broken and hopeless spirit, were abundantly conspicuous. Only one of the number, it is true, showed any symptoms of outward contrition, or perhaps felt any; but utter despair of any mortal aid, I am quite sure, reigned in all their breasts.

After an interval of two or three minutes, another of the conspirators mounted the scaffold, and took his place by the side of his leader. He ran up the ladder in a hurried manner, looked flushed, and was evidently much excited. He gazed repeatedly over his shoulder at the crowd, but I do not recollect his saying anything to them. Both he and Thistlewood politely, but decidedly, refused to hold any communication with the ordinary. After a little while he became composed, and I could observe him slowly, and with a steady but rather an anxious look, examining all parts of the dreadful ceremony, not merely as they related to himself, but as they applied to his unfortunate associates in guilt.

During all this time the crowd observed the most solemn silence, for even the low, whispering sound I have already described was quite hushed, and no one moved, or indeed had room to move.

Next came one whose behaviour was so different

from that of the others, that I should have said he had been drinking, were not this impossible. Looking towards St. Sepulchre's, he gave three cheers, talked a great deal, and wished to address the people. Thistlewood repeatedly desired him to be quiet, with the air of a man accustomed to be obeyed by those under him.

The whole deportment of this man on the scaffold was apparently reckless; and it was impossible, when viewing his indecent behaviour, with his foot literally touching the coffin he was soon to inhabit, not to suppose him destitute of any right moral feeling. And yet all this was mere external show. On the evening before his death he wrote three letters,—one to his wife, one to his daughters, and one to his son, a little boy to whom he seems to have been much attached. There is no doubt of the authenticity of these documents, and they show us, in the first place, how little we can sometimes judge of men by outward appearances; and secondly, how small a chance even the best feelings of our nature have for celebrity, when developed by persons in vulgar life. Had the following letter been written to his son by a Jacobite nobleman of 1745, about to expiate on the scaffold the crime of high treason, instead of by a poor Radical butcher of 1820, how different a place would it hold in our estimation!

“My little dear boy William, I hope you will

live to read these few lines, when the remains of your poor father is mouldered to dust. My dear boy, I hope you will bear in mind the unfortunate end of your poor father, and not place any confidence in any person or persons whatever. For the deception, the corruption, and the ingenuity in man, I am at a loss to comprehend—it is beyond all calculation. My dear boy, I hope you will make a bright man in society; and it appears to me the road you ought to take is, to be honest, industrious, sober, and upright in all your dealings; and to do unto all men as you wish they should do unto you. My dear boy, put your trust in God; and be cautious of every shrewd, designing, flattering tongue. My dear boy, be a good, kind, obedient child to your poor mother, and comfort her; and be a loving brother to your sisters. My dear boy, I hope you will regard these my last instructions. From your loving and unfortunate father, — — — . — Newgate, Sunday night, 8 o'clock, April 30th, 1820.”

Who is there that, on reading these pathetic lines, would not like to know what was the effect of instructions such as these, delivered at such a moment? It is now twenty years and upwards since they were penned,—the crime and its penalty are alike forgotten,—but the boy must be grown to manhood, and who shall say how useful and virtuous a citizen he may not have become?

Then came the negro, who was the only one of the whole number that showed any symptoms of contrition, or, as it was called, of alarm. He certainly looked very unhappy, and I thought trembled as he was planted by the side of his wretched companions in guilt. His step was firm, however, and he bowed respectfully to the crowd when he first ascended the scaffold ; but he said not a word. He was the only one of the number who made no objections to the cap being pulled over his eyes from the first, and even gave the handkerchief which he held in his hand that it also might be bound over his face.

Lastly, and in most disgusting contrast to this poor negro, came a reckless fellow, who, shortly after taking his place, coolly took a pinch of snuff, and then kicked off his shoes with a bravado air ; this being done, it appears, in order to give the lie to his grandmother, who, from an early perception of his gibbet-like propensities, and anticipating the very fate he was about to suffer, had declared he would die in his shoes !

The executioner, whose whole proceedings showed him to be a very bungling personage, now mounted by means of a ladder to the cross beam of the gallows, to which he tied the end of the cord, the noose of which had been previously placed about Thistlewood's neck. There is

nothing which fidgets a sailor at any time more than seeing a rope made fast in a lubberly manner ; but on such an occasion as this, when the ignorance of the person employed might have led to the most unpleasant results, it became seriously annoying to witness the inefficient manner in which the ropes were attached to the beam. My naval companion well nigh lost patience, and I verily believe if I had not restrained him, would have run down to explain to the sheriffs' bungling deputy how a line ought to be secured. I quieted him at last by suggesting, that, however contrary to rule the hitches of the rope might be made, they would in all probability serve the fatal purpose for which they were intended.

“ Yes,” cried he, “ but only think what a dreadful aggravation it will be to the sufferings of any of these poor fellows if the knot slips—as slip I fear it will—and how much the solemn effect of the whole ceremony will be injured by any such accident as should precipitate the wretched man to the ground.”

At length all the five cords were fastened, and the executioner having descended, the ordinary, or clergyman of Newgate, passed repeatedly along the line, endeavouring with anxious solicitude to engage the thoughts of these unhappy men in religious exercises. With the single exception of

the contrite negro, none showed the least disposition to receive the proffered comfort. One of them, I forget which, even spoke scoffingly to the clergyman, upon which Thistlewood reproved him, and bade him hold his tongue. When, however, upon this show of right feeling the ordinary again appealed to the ringleader himself, he shook his head and said,—“It’s of no use, sir, I beg you not to importune me,” or some expression of that kind.

Shortly afterwards I distinctly heard Thistlewood say to his neighbour, “We shall soon learn the great secret!” This he spoke with a firm voice, and indeed I may say that his whole behaviour was that of an uncommonly resolute man, who believed himself to be a martyr in a great political cause.

I could not help, therefore, repeatedly thinking, as I looked at the party, that had they not been intercepted in their course, but had actually made their way, full armed, into the room where the defenceless cabinet ministers were at dinner, they might have accomplished the first part of their desperate enterprise, by slaughtering them all. I have indeed heard it said, that the particular minister least likely to be shaken by such a contingency, from having seen more personal conflicts than any man alive, has declared that he believed

such might have been the result had they been assaulted when off their guard.

When the last rope had been attached to the transverse beam over head, the executioner, having performed that part of his office which lay above-board, removed his ladder, and descended by a set of steps at the end of the scaffold, which he entered by a small wicket, to station himself at the bolt which retained the trap door, on which the unfortunate men stood, in its horizontal position. Before proceeding to make this last preparation for the dreadful launch into eternity, he drew gently over the eyes of each of the conspirators in succession, the cap with which it is usual to cover the heads of sufferers at the fatal tree. The ordinary stood in front of them, with a small Bible in his hand, not open, but with his fingers inserted in various places, to which, in his vain endeavours to gain their attention, he had repeatedly referred.

As every one in the crowd now knew that the signal of death was about to be made, the most truly awful silence prevailed, far and near, and I fancied, as I looked at this fearful scene, that I could hear my heart beating against my breast—its motions I could see perfectly. In a few seconds we knew for certain that these five human beings, now full of “lusty life,” breathing, and possessed of all the faculties of intelligent creatures, would be reduced

to senseless masses of clay, and their souls winged we knew not whither, and dared not venture to conjecture to what end !

At this awful moment there was probably not one person in the crowd who was not more or less impressed with awe at the solemn nature of the example about to be made. I watched the countenances and manner of the multitude, and could see nothing but the deepest attention. Among our own small party, I can answer for the depth of the impression. The women who were in the room along with us now became excessively agitated, and drew back from the windows. Even the men appeared as if they would gladly have done so too.

I forget in what the last dreadful signal consisted, but it was delayed not a moment longer than to give time for the necessary preparations already described. Previously to the hidden bolt being withdrawn, the platform on which the men stood appeared firm and without a break. The zealous clergyman continued praying aloud; while the executioner, by drawing the caps over the eyes of the unhappy criminals, gave notice that their end was at hand. Up to this moment the ropes about their necks had been purposely left so slack, that the loose curve, or bight, as it is called in nautical language, reached half-way down their backs, but

in the next instant, the fatal signal being given, all was changed ! The ground under their feet had given way, and their bodies, suddenly projected downwards, could now only be seen above the scaffold, from the waist upwards ; while by the violence of the jerk the ropes had become as tight as rods of iron ; and such was the sudden momentum, that the substantial carpentry of the scaffold creaked like the timbers of a ship.

The newspapers, I suppose for the purpose of producing more effect, talked of the last struggles of these unhappy men ; but there was no such thing visible to us, who were less than twenty yards from the spot, and I am persuaded that death was the instantaneous effect of the violent wrench to which the vertebræ of the neck were exposed in a sudden perpendicular fall of at least three feet. Be this as it may, I positively declare that no motion in any one of these five cases was visible, except a slow, and certainly very frightful-looking, rotatory movement of some of the bodies, caused by the torsion of the cords, which being new, naturally uncurled as the strain came upon them.

The whole sight up to this terrible moment, and for the next hour, was one in the highest degree solemn and impressive ; and I could not help believing, as I looked over the silent crowd, and observed their awe-stricken gaze, that although there

must of course have been among so numerous an assemblage some hardened breasts incapable of being moved even by such a sight, the vast majority could not possibly remain unmoved during the very long hour in which they beheld these five lifeless bodies, suspended high in the air over their heads. For my part, at least, I can say with truth that I have never beheld anything nearly so impressive as the whole of this painful tragedy; and judging from what I could detect of the sentiments of the crowd, I should say that they were as deeply moved as it was possible for persons of their class and habits to be moved by anything. I consider, accordingly, that the instruction and warning, the moral lesson, in short, which it is the sole purpose of the laws to inculcate by such dreadful examples, were as fully imparted to the populace as the nature of things will admit of.

I afterwards heard it remarked by an acute observer of men and manners in different countries, that, revolting as capital punishments sometimes are, and of doubtful utility in certain cases, there is nothing which tends so indisputably, as a public execution does, to prove to the mass of the people that there is actually a government in the country, willing and strong enough to enforce the laws. Up to the period of the ceremony, therefore, to which I have now brought the description, and which it is

of importance to bear in mind terminates all ordinary executions in England, nothing can be conceived more effective or better calculated, by the awful solemnity of its details, to advance the ends of justice. What follows in cases of high treason, after the punishment of death, is of far more questionable propriety ; not only from its shocking the feelings of the multitude, but, which is a still more important consideration, from its tendency to remove, or at all events essentially to weaken, the impression made by what has gone before :—the effect being more or less to draw the sympathies of the spectators from the side of government to that of the sufferers, instead of linking them cordially with the offended laws of their country.

It seems quite obvious that whenever, in a free country, the execution of justice is severe, it ought to be divested of everything which looks vindictive—precisely as it is of importance in the preliminary administration of justice, to carry on all the proceedings not only with patience and temper, but with a constant leaning towards the accused party ; nor is this done from any over-refined tenderness to “ poor suffering guilt,” but solely for the purpose of carrying the sympathy of the people along with the acts of those to whom they have delegated the duty of administering the government.

In those countries where accused persons in

criminal cases are subjected during their trial to a system of cruel cross-questions and brow-beatings, it is impossible to carry the opinions, and still less the feelings, of the public along with the course of justice. On the very same principle, it is unreasonable to expect that, after the last sentence of the laws has been carried into execution, the mass of the people will not be outraged when, as I am about to describe, public decency is set at nought by mangling the inanimate bodies of the offenders.

At the end of an hour from the period at which the drop fell from beneath the feet of the criminals, the board on which they had stood was again brought to its horizontal position, and the bodies being cut down, one after the other, were laid on their backs in their coffins, with the heads projecting over the end. A strange-looking figure, in a black mask, made his appearance with a knife in his hand. With this inefficient instrument he proceeded to separate the heads of the culprits from their lifeless trunks: a proceeding which called forth the loud and bitter execrations of the multitude, and well it might, for anything more repugnant to all their best feelings cannot be conceived.

It may, perhaps, have a salutary effect to mark by some strong distinction the difference between high treason and all other offences, from its being a crime which strikes at the very roots of civil society.

But if the punishment of decapitation, which has descended to us from barbarous times, must still form that distinction, we surely ought not to render it still more revolting than it was in the days of its original institution, by omitting the effective parts of the ceremony, and substituting others calculated only to disgust. If a traitor's head is to be struck off, let it be done with a broad-edged, shining axe, wielded by a headsman, dressed in some imposing garb significant of his public office, and not by a fellow with a pork-butcher's knife in his hand! and, above all, let him not be dressed in a sailor's jacket and trousers, as the official cut-throat was upon this occasion, to our great indignation.

It must be recollected that it is not the mere act of decapitation that affects the multitude, but the solemnity of the manner in which the traitor's offence is thus distinguished from all others; and it can answer no good purpose, but quite the contrary, to treat even a traitor's dead body as if it were the carcass of a brute, and not the recent tenement of an immortal soul.

Accordingly, I should say that while the first part of the above-described ceremony appeared to be eminently impressive, the concluding parts of it were calculated not only to undo the first salutary effects, but to leave on the minds of the spectators

a result calculated to diminish their reverence for the laws of their country.

As each head was taken off, the executioner held it up, and called out with a loud voice, "Behold the head of a traitor !"

This part of the ceremony appeared to me by no means unimpressive ; and even the crowd seemed to mark their sense of the difference between it and the savage act of decapitation, by uttering only a groan, almost amounting to a shout, as the heads were successively exposed to their view ; whereas during the previous clumsy and offensive process their yells of horror indicated how much they were shocked.

Upon the whole, I should say that this part of the execution of traitors is not only utterly inconsistent with modern manners, but is especially unsuited to the habits and tastes of this country, and it ought to be abolished ; especially as another part of it, almost too disgusting to mention (I mean the embowelling), has already been done away with.

My chief purpose in describing these painful scenes is the hope that the subject may engage the attention of persons whose position in life gives them the power of remedying an evil which, as it lies quite out of their way to witness, may never have been brought to their notice as an object worthy of their consideration. I am well aware that I incur

the hazard of being thought indelicate, and even hard-hearted, by describing such revolting scenes in any detail. But as I am firmly persuaded that it is only by bringing their evil effects fully forward that any chance exists of amelioration, I have ventured to expose myself to such risk. I ought, perhaps, to have mentioned before that it has been my fortune to observe the effect produced on the minds of the people by the execution of justice in many other countries very differently circumstanced from my own; and if I have thus been enabled to draw any inferences calculated to advance the cause of civilisation, I should hold myself culpable if I were, from any fear of misconstruction, to withhold my testimony, such as it is, against proceedings which, I am convinced, act directly against the laws, instead of co-operating with them.

In the same spirit, and in the full conviction of its importance in a public point of view, I shall now proceed to describe the method of executing criminals in France—a method which has been very often cried up as far more humane than that used in England, and therefore worthy of adoption by us. As, however, I do not conceive it probable that this opinion could be maintained by any one who has either had personal means of examining the subject, or has heard it fairly described, I shall endeavour to lay the whole fully before those who

are desirous of knowing the truth, and who, for the sake of obtaining information, are willing to run the hazard of having their feelings somewhat disturbed.

On a bitter cold day, in Paris, in the beginning of December, some years ago, I was present at the execution of a murderer, one Daumas Dupin, by the guillotine, which in those days used to be erected in the well-known Place de Grève, now called the Place de l'Hôtel-de-Ville. This situation, which is one of the most central in Paris, has recently been changed to one of the Places (I forget its name) at a distance from the populous parts of the town, and one better adapted, in many respects, to the purpose.

My object in going to such an exhibition was two-fold. I had a great curiosity to see the instrument which performed such an important part in the French revolution, at a period when the greater part of the executive functions of the administration resided in the very edge of the knife—to what purpose the world has seen. In the next place, I wished to establish, by actual observation, a fair comparison between the French and English methods of carrying the extreme sentence of the law into effect. I had heard many arguments in favour of the French system, chiefly grounded on two points: first, on the rapidity of its action, and the

consequent diminution of suffering of the unhappy object of the punishment; and secondly, from its being preferable, as a matter of taste, to what is called the dog-like death, and protracted exposure of the culprit, on the English scaffold.

The prisoner was brought along the Quais from the Concièrgerie in a common cart, such as the billets of fire-wood used in Paris are carried about in. He was seated on a cross bench with his back turned to the horse, and by the side of a priest, who every now and then held a cross to his companion's lips, but he did not receive this act of attention in a very edifying manner. In spite of the severe cold, the prisoner's head was left uncovered, and his neck also bare, in ominous preparation. The crowd along the different Quais had become so dense that the mounted guard who accompanied the cart had enough to do to clear a passage, which was closed again behind the instant the cart had passed. It seemed a very bad regulation that a prisoner, under such circumstances, should be paraded for so great a distance through the crowd, and certainly it would facilitate any attempt at rescue, should such a measure be contemplated. The transit of every other kind of conveyance had been intercepted, so that the only sound of wheels came from those of the cart bearing the culprit to the place of execution. Every one, I am sure,

will remember the descriptions given of this lugubrious sound, which, during the reign of terror, gave dreadful note of preparation at a certain hour of every day.

On entering the Place de Grève, or rather that part of it which the mounted gendarmes managed with considerable difficulty to keep clear, the surrounding crowd took off their hats, and remained uncovered during the remainder of the ceremony. The effect of this movement was striking enough, but it would have been greater had it been accompanied by any cessation of the universal talking which prevailed from first to last over the whole assembly. More than one-half of the crowd consisted of women and children. The cart drew up at the foot of a short ladder, reaching from the scaffold to the ground, a height of about six feet. The prisoner and priest then got out, and the poor wretch's hands being tied, and his neck and shoulders still more effectually bared, he was desired to ascend the ladder. On reaching the platform at top, he was placed on a small step or shelf fixed to the lower end of an upright board about five feet long, to which he was instantly bound by means of two straps. This board was then turned down, with the man attached to it, by means of a hinge or pivot, in such a way that he was stretched along horizontally, at full length,

with his face downwards. A slight push by the executioners impelled the board along a grooved plane, till the man's neck came directly under the fatal knife, suspended high in the air, between two upright posts. In the next instant the cord which held the bolt was pulled—the weapon descended, and in the twinkling of an eye, the murderer's head, separated from the trunk, fell into a box placed at the further end of the scaffold. It took exactly fourteen seconds from the time the prisoner's foot first touched the scaffold till he lay a lifeless corpse before us.

The next proceeding was to draw back the board on which the headless body now lay, to unstrap it, and to trundle it in the most unceremonious way possible, all gory and horrible as it was, into a large oblong basket on one side. The box into which the head had fallen when separated by the blade was then lifted up, and its ghastly contents pitched, with equal unconcern, into the basket. All this was fearful enough; but when the basket, streaming with gore, was lifted off the platform into the cart, and driven away, its ghastly track could be followed all along the Quais!

The gendarmes now gave the crowd free permission to approach the scaffold; a licence of which they availed themselves with the greatest eagerness, apparently desirous of gloating their

sight with a nearer view of the actual evidences of what had taken place. In this they were amply gratified, for the crimson flood was still streaming along the flooring, and dripping between the planks on the streets. The huge knife, too, and the ponderous mass of wood and metal to which it was fixed, as well as the pillars of the horrible machine, being literally bathed in blood, were very terrible to behold.

Meanwhile the executioners set to work, with the utmost "sang froid," to wash the guillotine ; and a row of persons, all chattering and laughing, as were the rest of the crowd, having been stationed between it and the Seine, a series of large buckets full of water were handed up. I counted no fewer than twenty-four of these which were required before the whole machine could be purified from the stains left upon it by the execution. During the half-hour which elapsed while this was going on, I caught myself repeatedly saying, with Lady Macbeth, "who would have thought the old man had so much blood in him?" But the consequences of this process of ablution were such as I certainly had never contemplated, nor have I ever heard them described, though they serve to explain, in a perfectly intelligible manner, a well-known characteristic expression of the French revolution, which, up to that time, I had considered as merely

figurative ; I allude to the descriptions of the “ streets running with blood.”

It must be understood that, since a large quantity of water is contaminated, or rendered red, by a few drops of blood, the effect of dashing upwards of twenty bucketsful of water on the scaffold was to fill all the gutters in the neighbourhood with a red stream. Now, as the rush of men, women, and children to the point of attraction was so great that they neither saw nor cared for what was under-foot, the whole Place, and even the pavement of the adjacent streets for some distance, was covered with footmarks, every one of which told its separate tale of horror !

During the whole ceremony the sound of the most animated general conversation never ceased for a single moment ; and altogether, I must say, that anything less impressive, in the way of example, I never beheld. In the first place, the procession from the prison to the guillotine, in an ordinary wood-cart, would have been ludicrous had it not been for the terrible end of the journey. Secondly, the excessive hurry of the final proceedings by which the unhappy man was hurried out of the world in less than a quarter of a minute after he mounted the scaffold, gave an air of rude and savage precipitancy to the action, very hurtful, I thought, to the effect on the minds of the

spectators. Then came the fearfully shocking scene of the basket, and, lastly, the washing, which really looked more like the cleaning out of a shambles than anything else; followed up, as it was, by the paddling of the feet of the multitude in the streams which flowed from the place of execution.

It might be possible, no doubt, to remove some portion of these disagreeable accompaniments of this method of inflicting capital punishments; but I should say that the worst points about it, namely, that very haste, which is sometimes pointed out as its chief recommendation, and the hideous quantity of blood which is spilt, can never be got rid of; and I am quite convinced, from what I then saw in Paris, that the corruption of taste, and the induration of feeling, together with the total absence of all solemnity and of any instruction derivable from impressive example, are sufficient to outweigh every advantage which can be imagined to belong to the guillotine, as compared to the gallows. Besides which, I am thoroughly persuaded that by the English method of execution, as now arranged at the "new drop," the sufferings of the unfortunate culprits are to the full as brief as they are in the case of the guillotine. It is dreadful to think that the punishment of death should ever be necessary; but as long as civil society exists, there will be some

crimes which can be kept in check only by means of this extreme measure. If this be true, as the best authorities on such subjects seem to be agreed upon, it becomes a most important consideration to decide which method is the least painful to the unhappy sufferers, and at the same time the most calculated to leave on the minds of the spectators that impression of awe and respect for the laws of the country, to produce which appears to be the only legitimate object of judicial punishments.

To talk of hanging being “a dog-like death,” is quite to mistake the nature of cause and consequence: for surely if a man commit a murder, or stir up a rebellion, or otherwise conduct himself much worse than any dog, he forfeits all claim to delicacy on that score. And if the question of bodily suffering were settled to be equal in both cases, as I believe it is, it seems to be a waste of sympathy to consider the matter in the light alluded to.

I can only say that I have used no exaggeration whatever in describing these two terrible scenes,—the one in England, the other in France; nor have I a moment’s hesitation in saying, that while the French method is not only unimpressive but disgusting, and calculated to shock the feelings of the multitude, and to corrupt their manners, the solemn ceremony of an English execution is not

only one of the most striking and awful scenes in the world, but is essentially instructive, from being directly calculated to vindicate the outraged majesty of the laws, and thence to deter the turbulent and wicked from interfering with the well-being of society.

CHAPTER VI.

TRACES OF THE REVOLUTIONARY TEMPESTS
WHICH HAVE PASSED OVER PARIS.

AT every turn in Paris one is put in mind of the revolutions which have swept like whirlwinds in succession over that country within the last half century. Nor does it much matter whether the incident which recalls these things be great or small, so it sets the imagination a-going; just as a farthing candle will set fire to a palace, or a Congreve match explode a powder magazine, as readily as a waggon load of ignited combustibles.

In the famous wardrobe of the cathedral of Notre Dame I remember, when Napoleon was a prisoner at St. Helena, seeing the robes in which he had been crowned. With the most extraordinary want of what may be called historical taste, the restored Bourbon family had ordered that the innumerable bees with which it had pleased Buonaparte to have his robes embroidered should be picked out! In a similar spirit, the same or some other emblem of the empire was carefully removed from a magnifi-

cent carpet of the Gobelins manufacture, used to cover the floor of one of the principal rooms of the Tuileries. In their place had been substituted, of course, a set of fleur-de-lis, the ancient device of the Bourbon line. These held their places till the fierce lustre of the "glorieuses Journées" burnt up the lilies of Charles X. in France, that is to say, in Paris, which is France, just as Constantinople is Turkey, whatever the geography books may say to the contrary. As soon as the bustle of the "Revolution of July" was well over, and the elder branch of the Bourbons expatriated, the fleur-de-lis, the ancient symbol of so much royal renown, was held in such abhorrence that the poor carpet was once more packed off to the Gobelins, where I saw a party of workmen actually employed in taking out the lilies and substituting stars in their place. I could not help thinking that if these fellows only managed to loiter a little over their work, they might, in the revolutions of French politics, have a life-rent job out of this carpet; since before they have well finished one end of it they may be called upon to unwind the other from the loom in order to substitute the rising sun of some new dynasty in the place of the star now in the ascendant, but which, like the bees of Buonaparte, may fly away in a moment, or be scattered to the winds like the unhappy lilies of Louis.

That such an event may be long deferred, or entirely prevented, is the sincere prayer that every honest politician in Europe, of every class, must breathe. For if it be true that the blessings of civilisation are extensively diffused, in peace, by the colonists of England in every corner of the globe, so it may be truly said that the wars of France have a tendency no less direct to retard the moral and political improvement of the world. Now, as all parties appear to be agreed that the present monarch, Louis Philippe, has the peace of Europe, and of France in particular, sincerely at heart, and has more power than any other man alive to keep things quiet, who would not cry, with the prophet Daniel, “O King, live for ever !”

Of all these choppings and changes, one of the most curious and ridiculous is that which has taken place in the names of such streets as were called in old times after the various saints of the calendar,—such as the Rue St. Jacques, St. Dominique, St. Hyacinthe, &c. Now, there was a period, as every one knows, during the first, or great revolution in France, when the would-be-wise men of the west who misdirected the affairs of that distracted country, decided, after mature deliberation, that all religion was a farce, and entirely an invention of the priests. It followed, as a natural consequence of this sage resolution, which was

regularly moved and seconded, that there never could have been any saints; and, therefore, to give streets the above names was held to be a mere piece of superstition of their bigoted ancestors, but quite unworthy of the free-minded citizens of such an enlightened city as Paris, at the close of the eighteenth century. Having taken this magnanimous resolution, the obvious thing to have done would have been to change the names of the streets entirely, and to have called them after the great or good men of the day. The Rue St. Juste, for instance, might have taken the honourable title of Rue Marat; and the Rue St. Honoré, the Rue Robespierre, from that street having had the honour of lodging this distinguished cut-throat. But perhaps these heroes of the revolution had knowledge enough of human nature left to suspect that, although they had overturned an empire, and established, by incontrovertible decrees, that there was neither God nor devil, their decrees were not strong enough to persuade the old men and women of their town to call those streets which they had scrambled up and down for the better part of a century by any other names than what they had been accustomed to know them by. What, therefore, was to be done? It was impossible to leave such decided mementoes of the exploded Christian religion staring them in the face at the corner of

every street in Paris, and yet it was found impossible to change the names entirely. At length it occurred to one of these worthy statesmen (well worthy of the times, certainly !) that as they had cut off their king's head, the next most respectable thing they could do, and most in character with that patriotic act, would be to cut off (in effigy) the heads of their saints also. And so, without more ado, they sent for a party of masons, and desired them forthwith to take hammer and chisel and chip off the hateful word Saint from the name of every street where these superstitious letters were found.

What seems not a little instructive is the fact that this truly mechanical method of deciding a religious question has so long outlasted the impious philosophical disquisitions which led to the absurd and clumsy operation alluded to. The vain and trashy, as well as impious, decrees respecting the religion of the country have sunk into the grave with the fools and scoundrels who gave them expression; but the curious in such matters may still see in many parts of Paris these mutilated memorials of the anti-religious fanaticism of that melancholy epoch of French history.

In the fashionable parts of the town at the west end of the Rue St. Honoré, for instance, into which the Christian religion has been officially voted back again, all such "filthy witnesses" of the past

excesses have been pretty well obliterated. But if we cross the water, and visit the Quartier St. Jacques, or that of la Sorbonne, or go a little to the eastward, into the vulgar, or eastern end of the Rue St. Honoré, we shall find numerous specimens of the thing I am speaking of. At the corner of that street and the short lane (I forget its name) which leads up to the Marché des Innocens, you may see the poor *St.* rudely cut out, and the *Honoré* left standing ! The work has been so hastily and awkwardly done that the want of balance in the letters strikes the eye at once. The omission, or more correctly speaking, the erasure makes the *St.* only the more conspicuous ; therefore, so far as that goes, this absurd measure calls attention to the subject, instead of turning people's thoughts from it.

It is probable that the intention of the wicked and ill-judging men who then governed France, in this and other measures, was chiefly to show their own contempt of things sacred ; and therefore the more conspicuous their insults against everything religious the better for their purpose.

In the same spirit, the mob of Paris during a riot not many years ago, sacked the archbishop's palace, and threw the library into the streets, to be trodden under foot. Nor were they satisfied till they had consummated their iniquity, and given

the finishing stroke to their work, by first breaking all the windows of the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, and then by tying a rope round the cross which surmounted the building, and bringing down this chief object of their disrespect, amidst the shouts of the assembled multitude. It gives a curious picture of the state of politics, and of manners generally in Paris, to observe that the glass in the windows of this church had not been mended when I saw them several years after this *émeute*, while the cross torn down from the angle over the main window still lay prostrate in the gutter !

In some places a board with the old name of the street painted on it is nailed over or under the old title ; and thus the philosophising passenger, as he rattles along, may moralise from his cab on the rise and fall of empires, on the establishment of democracies, the restoration of monarchies, or the change of dynasties ; and all this without the ordinary trouble of studying history in books, for here we have "sermons in stones" to the very letter, so plainly written that he who runs may read.

In the same Rue St. Honoré the curious in revolutions may find other touches of history not less classical and characteristic in their way than those above-mentioned. At the corner of the Rue Rohan, which exactly faces the well-known Rue Richelieu,

there appears to have been a severe contest between the military and the revolutionary party, during the "glorious days of July, 1830." The corner house of the Rue Rohan and Rue St. Honoré was, on that occasion, occupied by a body of the Swiss Guard, who had been driven from the adjacent palace of the Tuileries, and who, on being attacked by superior numbers, bravely defended themselves, till they were successively driven from the rez-de-chaussée to the "premier étage," and so on to the "second," and "troisième." At each stage the numbers of these gallant and loyal Swiss were thinned, and the killed and wounded being thrown from the windows by the triumphant party, their bodies formed a bank or "talus" several yards in height, which was gradually augmented till the top of the heap was crowned by the last unfortunate soldier of these devoted royalists, not one having been spared! Such are the current incidents of a civil war. I had this story from one of the members of "La Jeune France," as he called himself—a man who not only was not ashamed of having joined in this fray, but who gloried in having put to death, with his own hands, upwards of twenty of his fellow-countrymen, whose sole crime was having bravely stood by their king! Had the issue of the insurrection of July been different, my friend might have shared the fate

and fame of Fieschi and his infernal machine ; but he now lives “a prosperous gentleman,” fattening in office, and basking in public favour.

Any one who stands at the point where the Rue Richelieu meets the Rue St. Honoré, and looks upwards, towards the opposite side of the way, will be satisfied that some sharp fighting must have taken place there, for the plastered front of the house which faces the Rue St. Honoré has been so peppered with musket-balls that it looks as if the wall had had the small-pox.

Amidst the grave and painful reflections which any traces of the short but sanguinary civil war of 1830—in which we know by the official returns that more than ten thousand men were killed and wounded—there occur trivial circumstances which, in spite of ourselves, force a smile to the lips. I have seldom carried any one to the spot in question without remarking more or less mirth being excited by the manner in which a huge chapeau bras, hung up as a sign over a hat-maker’s door, has been pierced by one of these revolutionary shots. Indeed, this immoveable old cocked hat, rigged fiercely across the corner, with a diagonal sort of half-drunken swagger, as if in defiance of the ball which had pierced its forehead, wears a look irresistibly comic.

This intimate mixture of the ludicrous with the

serious, we have Shakspeare's authority, as well as that of Nature, for asserting to be universal, but I am not aware that examples of this seeming incongruity are to be found anywhere in such profusion as in France. Perhaps it adds not a little to the happiness of that merry people, though we may ridicule them for it, that they can turn everything into a jest. The worthy latter, for example, over whose door the wounded chapeau bras remains a monument of as bloody a scene as ever was witnessed in a civil war, would on no account repair the wound his sign received in the battle, lest he should lose the mirth which the oddity of its appearance excites, and the consequent attraction to the shop of a fellow of humour enough to enjoy a laugh, even though associated with the massacre of his neighbours right and left. For the rest, it is to be recollected that the cocked hat being wounded in the service of the reigning dynasty, so far as it goes is a genuine trophy. When a new French revolution occurs we shall probably have a superb new hat at the corner as one of the signs of the times!

In any other nation on earth the occurrences of the last war in France would have left an impression so deeply humiliating as to have prevented the possibility of any allusion to them without extreme pain. But the French took these matters quite

differently, and, perhaps, with more wisdom. We may, accordingly, see many instances in which, instead of destroying any monuments of their national disgrace, they actually cherish them, as if the love of excitement were paramount to any other consideration, and that any kind of notice is preferable, in their estimation, to neglect.

I remember, in the year 1818, fully three years after the allies had entered France, seeing, near the town of Chaumont, a proclamation of Prince Schwartzemberg's pasted on the stable door of a post-house, first calling upon the inhabitants to be quiet and orderly, and then giving some very arbitrary directions about horses and provisions, the whole being written in the tone of an absolute conqueror. This document, though offensive, nationally speaking, in the highest degree, and calculated to record the degradation to which the people had been exposed, was still allowed to occupy a most conspicuous situation, three years after the events had occurred of which it was the evidence ! When we questioned the people about the military incidents of the period in question, they entered on the subject with the liveliest relish, as if they had not been at all sufferers.

In fact, I remember that out of delicacy to them, though they appeared to have little or no feeling for themselves, we changed the discourse by asking

the post-master if ever he had seen Napoleon? “ Oh no ! ” he cried, “ I never did. But what of that? I know just as much of him as I do of my present master, Louis XVIII. ; and all I know of his majesty is derived from that little bust eight or ten inches high, which you see I have placed beside that of the ex-emperor, my late master ; and they agree very well together, just as I agree with either, or with both. *Vive la gloire !* ”

To return to the capital, however, and the revolution of July, 1830. I must mention one very curious musket-shot, the effect of which, for aught I know, may exist to this hour, ten years after the event, for I saw it in 1836, five years and a half after it had been fired, though in a spot where one would have least expected to meet with such a thing. It is on that side of the statue gallery of the Louvre which faces the north, and looks into the Place de l'Oratoire, where the division between the pillars is filled up with plate glass. A musket-ball, fired from the court, having entered one of the windows, and crossed the aisle or side gallery, had penetrated the sheet of glass. The velocity must have been considerable, otherwise the plate must have been shattered to pieces, instead of which a clean round hole has been pierced through it, encircled by a set of rays streaming from it as a centre in a manner well worthy of observation,

independently of the historical interest of the accident.

Most fortunately, this shot, though fired, probably, with no such consideration, threaded its way among the statues without touching any one of them; and we shudder to think how much mischief a small deviation in its course might have effected! Had it struck that well-known statue, so dear to every papa, in which Silenus is dandling the infant Bacchus, or, worse still, had it injured the exquisite Milo Venus, how much more lasting would our regrets have been at the violence committed during that transient but fierce revolution!

Before closing this question of revolutions and their consequences, it may not be amiss for us English to consider, and be duly thankful, for the blessed difference in the political circumstances of France and England respectively during the last half century. Neither ought we to forget that we too have had our dreadful periods of revolutionary trial and bloodshed; and that compared with those melancholy periods of our past history, all our modern troubles, radical reforms, and other excitements, together with financial difficulties and commercial embarrassments, and all the other evils incident to the wars we have been engaged in, are essentially trivial and of no account. Let us only think how unspeakably aggravated our distresses would have

been, had the war, instead of being kept constantly at a distance from our shores, been waged within the island itself!

We are also very apt, rather arrogantly, to assume, when comparing ourselves with the French, that all the folly and crime of which our neighbours have been guilty in our day, would not have been exhibited by us in similar circumstances. But history tells us a different and less creditable story; and in the destruction of the Chief Justice Mansfield's library, and other lawless acts, not long antecedent to the French revolution, we may find as much to censure as in those riots when the Archbishop of Paris's palace was turned inside out. Or if we go about a century and a half further back, we shall find in our own annals but too many parallels to the more serious scenes of the French revolution; and thence we may learn to make more allowance for the errors, if not for the crimes, of our brave and accomplished neighbours.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PONTINE MARSHES—NAPLES—AN AGUE—
POMPEII--BALÆ—THE PORT OF MISENUM—VE-
SUVIUS—PROFESSOR JOHN PLAYFAIR.

I HAVE visited Italy twice in my life, under circumstances very dissimilar; and on both occasions I enjoyed advantages peculiar to the periods of life and opportunities of professional leisure which I enjoyed at those moments. On the first visit I accompanied several young men who, like myself, had so little time to spare, and so little money to spend, that we were obliged to move at a great rate, and to put up with many inconveniences, which then gave us little or no concern, though, at a later stage of our lives, they might have essentially interfered with our amusement.

The advantages of visiting any country in a rapid way are considerable, though, of course, there must occur, occasionally, countervailing disadvantages. It is useful, in the first place, to learn by actual observation where the objects of highest interest are situated, how they are to be got at, and

how much time it might probably require to see them to better purpose at a future opportunity, when we have more leisure. In the next place, we are enabled to get off our hands a multitude of minor objects, for which a single glance is sufficient; while it will often happen that for many scenes of high interest, even a transient view is quite sufficient to fix them permanently in the memory. There can be no doubt, too, that much more correct geographical information is acquired, of the relative position and distances of places when we pass rapidly from one to the other than when we loiter by the way, and make irregular stops. Finally, there is unquestionably a singular degree of satisfaction, especially in youth, in the mere act of passing rapidly over the ground.

On the second occasion when I visited Italy, being accompanied by my wife and family, I proceeded much more leisurely. I then found the value of the early and more rapid tour, chiefly in knowing the way to the places of most interest, and in being aware what things to omit seeing, which saves a world of time and trouble. Generally speaking, indeed, more than half of people's time abroad is wasted in seeing what is either worthless, or we expend both strength and spirits which might be far better bestowed on trifles, if we had only known beforehand what *not* to look at.

Italy is a ground so thoroughly ploughed up to the right and left, and all the roads are so beaten, that I shall skim lightly over them, and without attempting anything very exact, merely set down a few occasional notices which seem calculated rather to show the effect produced on our minds than to describe the things themselves.

On the first occasion, or that on which I visited Italy in a hurry, our young, and I may well call it energetic party, were absent from England only three months and a half; and yet in that short space of time we visited every town in Italy of the smallest note, and saw every statue and picture in each; crossed the Alps by four different passes; and travelled from end to end of France by two different roads.

We set out from Rome late in September of the year 1818, and although our stay had been very short in that wonderful city, certainly the most interesting on the Continent, we did not quit it before we had seen, by dint of whip and spur, and the expenditure of many a scudo in hackney-coach hire, and in bribery to custodi, almost every palace and picture-gallery in it, every ruin of any importance, and well nigh every statue of celebrity! I really do not believe any free men, not to speak of galley-slaves, ever worked harder in a given time. This, to say the least of it, was great indis-

cretion in the whole party ; in my case it was sheer folly, for I had not nearly recovered my strength since being laid up a few weeks before with a sharp attack of ague at Venice ; and along with this over-exertion, I was laying in a stock of malaria for another fever, by swallowing the pestilential air of Rome at its very worst season. Even if I had not then breathed in this deadly poison on a spot where it is always rife in the autumnal months, I should hardly have escaped it in crossing the Pontine marshes early in the morning of the following day, that is, at the worst time in the whole twenty-four hours ; and what gave me still less chance of escape, was the unconquerable drowsiness which came over me just as we entered that fatal region. I had been kept awake all night at Velletri, by a violent tooth-ach ; and as it was not till we had made some way towards the deadly marshes that I obtained any relief, the disposition to fall asleep just when I ought to have been most awake, became irresistible, and I rue the consequences to this hour.

The road which has been built upon the surface of these swamps is about twenty-four miles long : it is straight, flat, and hard, so that the carriage bowls along pleasantly enough, and if one could only get rid of the idea of insalubrity which attaches to the spot, the drive would not be disagreeable.

The luxuriance of the vegetation, due to a rich soil and a perpetual supply of moisture and heat, is so great, and the colours of the foliage so varied and brilliant, that the eye is almost dazzled with the beauty of this treacherous region. Were it not for the stagnant pools of water matted over with a green scum, like the coat of a snake, which occasionally peep through the dense brushwood of leaves and flowers, and the languid flow of the dirty canals on either side of the road, and the absence of hearty and healthy cultivation, one might suppose it a sort of wild garden. But this notion is sadly disturbed by the sight of the wretched inhabitants, all of whom seem in the last stages of disease, pale and wan as ghosts.

When we first entered the Pontine marshes, a little before sunrise, a thick fog rested so near the ground that only the tops of the trees, and the higher bushes, could be distinguished, like islands rising out of a sea of milk. As not the smallest breath of air passed over the face of the swamps to disperse the fever-giving miasmata, it was impossible not to feel that a sort of witches' cauldron was simmering to our destruction, and that this odious fog was the poisonous steam which the atmosphere of the night had engendered. I felt a sudden chill on entering the cloud, and longed earnestly for the sun to clear away the mischief. He succeeded

at last in absorbing the mist, leaving every bud and bough, every blade of grass, and even the dusty road itself, drenched in dew. This, however, was not the cheerful dew after a clear and serene night, but the drippings of the dark, churchyard vapours of the pestilential marsh—not the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath, but the noxious moisture exhaled from grounds which emperors and popes have for ages in vain tried to purify by draining. The air, too, felt so heavy that the respiration became loaded, as if the atmosphere had really lost its elasticity, or the lungs their energy. Although all this was, of course, only fancy, there was no fancy, alas! in the supposition that I was swallowing, at every inspiration, the seeds of a new and still more malignant fever.

Never, accordingly, shall I forget the delight of getting out of these horrid swamps, and arriving at Terracina, where the scene changed suddenly, and the bright blue sea came full before us on one hand, and a set of bold rocks, backed by a verdant country, glowing like the tropics, on the other. In a moment I forgot the toothach, snapped my fingers at the malaria, felt twice as strong as ever I was, and recommenced the same course of overworking which had rendered me eligible for the ague of the north of Italy, and which, no doubt, now co-operated with the Pontine marshes to make

the fresh poison work. In the mean time I thought nothing of these risks, but enjoyed without any drawback the sight of Cicero's villa, the bay of Gaeta, and the exquisite scenery which surrounds it, and all the more, perhaps, from the ideal, or rather associated, gloom and horror of the district we had just left. The vintage being then at its height, the inhabitants, men, women, and children, were all at work, some plucking the grapes from the vines which, at this part of the country, were as unlike the gooseberry-bush grape-vines of the Rhone as possible, but hung in rich and long festoons from tree to tree. Other parties were busily carting off the copious harvest, so fast, that,

“ Reeling with grapes, red waggons choked the way.”

These cargoes being turned over to another merry set, the juice was quickly pressed out of the fruit into great tubs, while a fourth party drew off the generous stream into skins, which, when filled, were laid two and two on asses' backs, to be conveyed to the wine-houses. Finally a set of women removed the well-pressed grape-skins in baskets, on their heads, to be used in the manufacture of verdigris, so that nothing was lost. The beautiful sky and warm climate of an Italian autumn gave spirit and character to this lively scene; which was kept up to the proper pitch of interest by the well-tanned, but still beautiful features and gay costume

of the peasants, their lively songs, their occasional dances, and, above all, by the classical nature of their occupation, so fertile in historical and poetical images, independently of its own essential elegance, and its numerous characteristic local associations.

It was quite dark on the 23rd of September, when we entered Naples, but the noise and bustle in the streets was so great that we thought there must be some popular tumult; and so, in fact, there was, but it was the tumult of every evening. On each side of the well-lighted street were ranged stalls, fruit, and iced water-stands, coffee-houses innumerable, and an endless variety of little shops, most of them ornamented with festoons of flowers and leaves, or with showy draperies, and all illuminated. The whole population appeared to be in the streets, and as every mortal seemed to be engaged in some business or pleasure, and was talking at the full stretch of his or her voice, the noise as we advanced slowly through the crowd—for there were no foot-pavements—became quite stunning. Nothing, indeed, which we had seen since leaving England had given us the smallest preparation for Naples. The noisiest and gayest region of Paris, the Palais Royal, is a model of tranquillity and decorum compared to Naples—while Rome, at the correspondent hour, is as still as the grave. At Venice there is certainly a merry sight in the evening round the

Place of St. Mark, but nothing at all like the uproarious merriment of Naples.

During the afternoon we had caught a sight of Vesuvius, ejecting puffs of smoke at intervals ; but as soon as it became dark, we discovered that along with the smoke a burst of flame, or rather of heat, for I believe there is no flame—and a magnificent jet of red-hot stones, rose to a vast height above the cone, once in every five minutes.

I am rather amused in looking back to see the plan of operations we laid down for my proceedings at Naples, for it never occurred to me that I was to pass the greater part of my time in bed ! Napoleon, it will be remembered, when asked once what, in his opinion, was the first and most important requisite for a soldier, replied, “ Health ! ” I am sure the answer will serve for a similar question in the case of tourists. And yet by a stranger and often very cruel perversity, many a poor invalid is dragged about from place to place in the hopeless search of that requisite without which the comfortable home never should have been left. That, however, was not my case, for I fancied I had regained all my strength, as I had all my spirits and curiosity. But I was miserably mistaken, and after settling that so many days were to be given to the museums and palaces in the town, a day to Vesuvius, another to Herculaneum and Pompeii, and a

couple to Pæstum, I was obliged to cut all short in the middle, send for a doctor, and lay myself up—a predicament which would have been less tolerable than it was—had not my mental energies and desire of locomotion faded and almost expired in proportion as my bodily strength declined.

It may well be asked, what was the occasion of all this intense hurry, especially at the most unhealthy season of the year, and why did I not either rather travel alone, and at leisure, or in the company of companions less vehemently hurried than those to whose chariot-wheels I chose to bind myself?

As to travelling alone, I could not afford it, but by clubbing means with my three companions the thing was made easy on that score. Next, as to time, I had important business to call me home by the middle of November, and it became a question whether or not it was worth while to see a great deal in a short interval, and of course in a hurry and superficially, or to see a small part of the Continent leisurely. I chose the extensive and rapid plan, and though it cost me a couple of smart agues, I have never repented of the choice. My ignorance of the country, and of what had been written upon it, both by ancient authors and by modern travellers, was amply supplied by my hard-reading, classical companions, so that I had no-

thing to do with the movements of the party, but followed the others in cheerful confidence that the very most that it was possible to see within the time we had to spare would be seen.

It was rather new, I confess, after having exercised the authority of chief in several men-of-war, to be ordered about from place to place, without having any voice in shaping the course to be steered, or regulating the work to be done. But as the captain of a ship, like a monarch, may be apt to forget that he is mortal, it is salutary that he should be reminded of the fact, and I am sure I was all the better for the moderate discipline I was exposed to on this journey. On this principle, too, I presume the rhyme has been constructed which says that—

“ An ague in the spring,
Is physic for a king.”

At least I found an ague in the autumn a most complete sedative to my operations for some years.

My fellow travellers took no more warning by me, than soldiers in battle take by the fate of their next file when struck down by a bullet—and went on seeing sights from sunrise to sunset without intermission; drinking ice-water all day long; eating rich dinners and heavy suppers; and laughing to scorn all my cautions, as I lay, prostrate before them, incapable of moving, for nearly a week. At

length, having done up, or demolished everything in and round Naples, they set off for Pæstum. I was not surprised, when they returned, to find they were disappointed, for, as they had been warm admirers of the gorgeous and elaborate splendours of the Duomo at Milan, I inferred that the same taste would probably not relish the ultra-simplicity of the Greek style at Pæstum. But their remarks, though intended to dissuade me from going to a spot even worse than the Pontine marshes for the malaria, had only the effect of stimulating my desire to see these solitary ruins, which one of the best judges of such things I have ever known used to say, were better worthy of a visit than anything else in Italy.

But my doctor, an eminent surgeon of Edinburgh, stared in horror when I spoke of going to Pæstum in my weak state, and positively forbade my leaving Naples till I should have gained more strength. I therefore once more begged my companions to proceed again to Rome, and abandon me to my fate, in order to complete their survey of that inexhaustible city, while I pottered about in the environs of Naples, to rejoin them, if I could, either at Rome or further north, as the case might be. Meanwhile I crawled through the galleries at Naples and the museum at Portici, and even made out Herculæum and Pompeii.

The first visit to Pompeii must form an era in every one's life, be his experience great or small, be he a classical scholar or an ignorant sea-captain, be he possessed of imagination or have a fancy as flat as a pancake. The guide carried me first to a great amphitheatre, and then to some temples and forums. All these produced but a feeble impression, for I had seen such, and finer, before. But I never shall forget the sensation I experienced on entering the streets of the desolate city.

In other places you are obliged to search for objects of interest, and to hunt among familiar scenes for curious exceptions. At Pompeii everything is curious, and even those things which are similar to objects with which we are acquainted elsewhere, possess an interest on that very account. Generally speaking, the effect of time is to wear out the impression of any given epoch, and it requires laborious research to determine what did and what did not exist at the period in question; but here the impress of time has been stereotyped, and we have, not one or two things, but everything exactly as it was stamped upwards of seventeen centuries ago. Sir William Gell very wittily and neatly calls Pompeii a "potted town;" a description, by-the-by, which would apply rather more correctly to Herculaneum than to Pompeii, inasmuch as Herculaneum was covered up, and, as it were, absorbed

in a fluid mass of trachyte and tufa, which on cooling down became hard; whereas Pompeii was merely enveloped in a cloak, and in some places a very thin cloak, of ashes.

The roofs of the houses are gone, and so are the people; but as everything else remains, or almost everything else, just as it existed at the moment of the whole being hermetically sealed by the volcano, there is an air of authenticity about the whole scene which contra-distinguishes Pompeii from every other place in the world. It is a singular pleasure to most people to light upon spots totally dissimilar to what they have seen before. I remember feeling this very strongly the first time I landed on a tropical island, the first time I attended the court of a native prince in India, the first time I saw a Chinese junk, and so on; but on no occasion have I felt more completely carried away from the ordinary world in which we live, than at Pompeii, and though I have beheld far more varied, brilliant, and, upon the whole, more pleasing and wonderful scenes, I can safely say that none nearly so curious has ever met my observation. Pompeii, however, is about as difficult to describe as a piece of music; the one must be heard, the other be seen, to be either understood or enjoyed; all that any description, therefore, can hope to accomplish is to tempt others to go thither.

Probably the most ordinary things are the most interesting. The little rooms which we see were actually inhabited, just as they now remain, by the Romans of the first century of our era; the pictures on the walls are the identical pictures they looked upon; the tables of marble are those at which they sat, on the very marble sofas we now see. Over the doors we see the real names of the owners who lived in the houses, and who moved about on the same pavements which we now tread, and may have slipped their feet into the same wheel-tracks into which our feet are apt to slip while we are gaping about us. The freshness of everything, the total absence of all modern admixture, and of all appearance of modern improvements, make us almost think the town is still possessed and inhabited by its ancient tenants; so that on turning the corners of the streets, or groping among the passages of a house, we half expect to meet the proprietor.

I have alluded to the wheel-tracks which are deeply cut in the stone pavement; but these are not the only marks of actual use which strike the eye everywhere. The stepping-stones at the doors, for example, are mostly worn down by the feet, and the sides of the wells are deeply cut with the bucket-ropes. It is very remarkable that even the narrowest streets of Pompeii are furnished with

commodious raised pavements for the foot-passenger — trottoirs, as they are called in French. And this reminds me of an odd jumble of circumstances. The French have the word for the thing, but not the thing itself, while we in England have the thing but not the word, which obliges us to use the compound expression foot-pavement. What is perhaps still more curious, the Italians, in process of time, instead of improving, have gone backwards, in this matter; for Pompeii, which must be upwards of two thousand years old, is far better off for trottoirs than any modern town in Italy! It may be mentioned, also, that at the crossings in the streets of Pompeii, a line of stepping-stones, six or eight inches high, is always placed, a contrivance for the accommodation of foot-passengers which I never saw in any other part of the world.

In a baker's shop we found three corn-mills, each formed of a solid cone of lava, with its apex upwards, surmounted by another stone, the under part of which was hollowed out so as to fit the first-mentioned cone, and the upper part into a hollow cone, or hopper, for the grain. The internal form of the upper stone was exactly that of an hour-glass. The oven resembled so exactly those of the present day, that I thought at first it must be a modern work. The chimney rose over the front :

and I mention this because it was the only chimney we saw in the place. In another house we saw a pile of mortar evidently prepared by the ancient Roman masons for some work in the neighbourhood. In most of the houses in one of the streets there stood great jars, probably for holding wine. On these the maker's name was stamped in letters as good as those of any modern printing; which renders it quite wonderful how that art should not have divulged itself till more than a thousand years afterwards. Under one of the names was stamped the word "Liberalis." In a pretty little shop stood a small, elegant jar, which, from the sculptured sign of a she-goat over the door, we inferred must have been a milkman's. The paintings on the walls need not be described, as they are now well known to the public, through the medium of the late Sir William Gell's faithful representations, which were all made on the spot with the camera lucida, as Sir William himself told me. The floors of most of the rooms consist of a rude kind of mosaic-work, the dimensions of each apartment being about fourteen feet square. In the larger houses, the rooms are built round a square court, or *patio*, as it is called in Spain, from whence alone their light appears to have been derived by the doorway,—thus we are left to conjecture that the inhabitants must merely have slept in these apartments,

and used the covered courts for dining and sitting in.

The dead silence which reigns in Pompeii in the midst of so much that is generally connected with bustle and noise, and the total absence of a single inhabitant where everything appears adapted to life, are wonderfully impressive, and cause a feeling of melancholy curiosity, which is not soon shaken off. As we stray through the ancient city, we involuntarily ask the questions, Where are all the people who seem to have been here even now? Where are the carts and carriages which have driven so recently over these streets? why is everything so still? Reason and history give an answer; but the imagination, unsatisfied, perpetually recurs to the same questions, as new proofs of what seems recent occupation strike the senses. We know that the inhabitants were all suddenly buried alive more than 1700 years ago, and that the town has not been inhabited since. But when we wander either among the streets or examine the houses within, and discover at every turn so many traces of man's handiwork, apparently of only a few days', or, it may be, a few hours', date, the will is puzzled, and the senses confused, while the imagination, inflamed by such a crowd of exciting associations, scarcely knows how to adjust itself, or how to enjoy, with any moderation, a feast differing entirely from

everything which is to be seen in any other part of the world.

On the day following that on which we visited Pompeii, we made an excursion to Baiæ, a scene of a different order, but not less interesting in its way, though to enjoy it fully a much more extensive acquaintance with the classics is requisite than I, alas ! possessed. But even a person not well versed in those matters may catch, as he goes along, a certain portion of the enthusiasm which by right belongs only to the initiated, and a thousand school-boy recollections, long dormant, are suddenly awakened by the mere mention of such names as crowd one's path in visiting the environs of Naples. Who, for example, could remain unmoved while the Lake Avernus, the Tartarus of Virgil, was pointed out to him, or the Lucrine Lake, or Acheron, or Cocytus, or Styx? Who could wander without a strange sensation of delight amongst the Elysian Fields, or enter the grotto of the Cumæan Sibyl without some of his classical tastes being revived?

It signifies nothing to say that these localities are mere unsubstantial imaginations of the poets ; for they have to the full as decided an existence in our fancy's memory, so to speak, as any true places we have either seen or heard of. Besides which there is every reason to suppose that these are the iden-

tical spots which the poets had in their eye when they wrote. It is clear from other circumstances that Virgil, for instance, knew the ground about Baiæ intimately; and as he found it thickly set with legendary fables and local superstitions, he boldly appropriated such of these as suited his purpose, married them to immortal verse in his *Æneid*, and by adhering to the truth of nature in his descriptions of the scenery, gave not only consistency and harmony to the whole picture, but that appearance of probability to the wildest fictions which it is the peculiar province of high genius to impart to whatever it chooses to create. He did more: he gave permanent interest and universal extension to scenes and circumstances heretofore confined to one spot, and known only to one set of people, but which have now become the enduring property of mankind at large. Their charm is more fully shared, no doubt, by the learned, but much of it is also spread among the unlearned; and thus, from its simplicity and truth to nature, it is appreciated by many to whom circumstances have denied the higher enjoyment of tasting the original inspiration at its fountain-head.

The genius of Sir Walter Scott has rendered the same service to Loch Katrine, and other Highland scenes, that Virgil has to the regions about Baiæ; and I have often seen tourists with the "Lady of

the Lake " in their hands, hunting for the scenes where the incidents of that poem took place, with the most undoubting, or at all events the most unreflecting confidence in the truth of the story. And such is the magical effect of poetry in the hands of genius, that the most incongruous materials are cemented together—the true, the false, the probable, the possible, and the impossible—and all so dressed up and arranged as to offend no preconceived notions or tastes, but, on the contrary, to win our entire sympathy. It is a strange perversion of the author's purpose, no doubt, to take his poetry for gospel, and to settle disputed points of history or topography by a reference to his unpremeditated numbers. Yet, while the poet dreamed of no such scrutiny in after times, there can be no truer test of his success than the fact of succeeding generations going over those scenes which had kindled his fancy and supplied it with expression, and carrying his book in their hands, in the innocent hope of sharing, however remotely, in the honour of feeling as he did on the same ground.

Forsyth did not see this matter exactly in the same light as I did, and for obvious reasons. He says, " On the promontory of Misenum is a crowd of ruins, so very indistinct as to admit of any name, I therefore allowed our guide to call them the Villas of Pliny, Lucullus, Marius, and whom-

ever he pleased ; but when he pointed out the Styx, and the Acheron, and the Elysian Fields, I felt some poetic anger on hearing names so awful and sacred, in my imagination, bestowed on a pitiful ditch—a fish-pond, and a few vineyards.”

Now, with due deference to this accomplished writer, I must think his classical anger misplaced, inasmuch as there could be no more remarkable evidence of the enduring excellence of the poetry which kindled in his imagination at the mere mention of the names he specifies, than their having local habitations given to them in modern times on the spot where unquestionably the ancient poet lived and wrote.

The same author, in his usual pithy style, speaking of Baïæ, says that “in the course of a few minutes you sail past the highest names of antiquity. You see Marius, Sylla, Pompey, Piso, Cæsar, Tiberius, Nero, all crowding in for the most beautiful angles, and elbowing each other’s villas. Yet what are these villas now?” and so forth. Now the interest which springs from this source is of a different order from that above alluded to: for there is no doubt whatever that the persons mentioned, and many others of more or less celebrity, actually inhabited the spots assigned to them, or, at all events, that neighbourhood, and it becomes an object of

very legitimate curiosity to determine with precision the actual site of the country residences of the distinguished persons who inhabited the Phlegræan fields in ancient times. I confess, however, that with all my faith in guides and guide-books, I felt no inconsiderable mortification in finding upon what slender evidence they decided on the position of Cicero's cottage and Cæsar's villa. It would have been very pleasant to have been certain on these matters, and to have speculated about the walks and talks of these great men, when on the very ground which they trod in company.

A third kind of interest belongs to this enchanted district, so rife in classical and historical associations, which I cannot pass over: I mean that of its nautical geography. The port of Misenum, the Portsmouth of the Roman fleet, exists as it did in the days when Pliny the elder, who had his flag there, rowed across the bay of Naples in his barge to see that great eruption of Vesuvius which overwhelmed Pompeii,—an adventure which cost the philosophical admiral his life.

Although we know that the ships of the Romans were very different from ours in many respects, there must have been many points in common between their fleet and those of our modern navies; for they had the same elements to contend with, and they had hardy enemies to battle with. The

same discipline, therefore, more or less strict, must have been necessary; and they must have been exposed nearly to the same hardships, privations, and disappointments. Great talents must have gained the same ascendancy as now; but political and party favour must have been at least as much employed as with us in the advancement of officers, both in their armies and in their fleets. For the leaders of the commonwealth of Rome—who were no more angels than our modern rulers are—must have known the importance of employing in the public service men of family and fortune, especially when they happened to be of their own way of thinking in politics. Finally, there could not fail to exist throughout the Roman navy a plentiful allowance of grumbling on the part of that large class of highly meritorious officers, whom the nature of things unfortunately, but inevitably, condemns to the lower ranks of the service.

These and many other trains of thought floated through my mind as I stood on the famous Cape of Misenum, near the ruins of the villa of Lucullus, and looked down upon the anchorage, once crowded with the line-of-battle ships of Augustus—now as desolate as the imperial city to which they belonged. I could not help thinking that, ages hence, a similar view might perhaps be taken of Spithead from Portsdown Hill, on the top of which Nelson's monu-

ment has been erected as a landmark for ships. The column will in time crumble to pieces, and even the nation he served and honoured may decline and fall; but the hero's fame will survive through all such vicissitudes, and, like that of Pliny or Lucullus at Misenum, spring to the memory of the future traveller who, in a spirit akin to that I have been describing, may view the anchorage from the heights overhanging Portsmouth.

As the greater number of these, and similar excursions to the *contorni* of Naples, may be performed in a carriage, I was enabled, though rather slowly, to recover my strength. But as the time rolled away, I began to fear I should lose the most interesting of all the wonders of Naples—the volcano of Vesuvius. It was not, strictly speaking, in a state of eruption, for no streams of lava were at that time flowing from the crater; but a constant series of jets of red-hot stones were going forward, and as I suspected these puffings might altogether cease before I got well, I fairly broke the restraints imposed by the doctor, and set off alone from Naples. On repairing to the town of Rosina, I was fortunate in getting for my companion the accomplished Salvatore, certainly one of the ablest, the most intelligent, and most agreeable of guides in Europe. This man has long and deservedly been at the head of the guides, and I found him, fifteen years after-

wards, as fresh and vigorous as ever, still the capo or captain of the ciceroni, and the person to whom the government of Naples look for a daily report of the state of the mountain.

Salvatore said, the weather appeared so unfavourable that it might be wiser to defer my excursion; but I had become so impatient that I insisted upon going on, and away we set on our donkeys. On reaching the base of the cone of ashes and cinders, we quitted our beasts and proceeded to climb the steep ascent; but I soon found that I had undertaken more than I was equal to, and must have given up the expedition, had not the assistant guide given me one end of a cord to hold in my hands, while he tugged at the other over his shoulder. By this means, and with no small fatigue, I reached at last the top of the bank or crest which surrounds the interior cone and crater. From the point we had now reached, Salvatore explained that there lay two roads to the best place for witnessing the explosions of the volcano, and as the mountain appeared to him to be in rather a more tranquil mood than it had been for some time past, he would advise our taking the route which passed nearest to the crater, or mouth, then in action. I agreed, of course, to anything proposed by such high authority; but I confess it looked to me a hazardous experiment, though I was assured that the distances were

much greater than I supposed, and that the total absence of all familiar objects of comparison constantly deceived strangers.

Just at this moment a fog began to spread itself over the top of the mountain, so thick that we lost sight first of the cone, and then of all the adjacent ridges: nevertheless, we proceeded on our way, guided by marks which I could neither see nor understand, but of which Salvatore spoke with perfect confidence. We had not marched more than ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, when we felt the ground tremble, and heard the volcano bellow in the most terrific style. In the next instant the great crater was heard to vomit forth a mass of fiery materials, which, judging from the sounds in the air—for we could see nothing—I verily thought must demolish us. Salvatore halted, and said, to our no small dismay, “I don’t at all like this.” The first noises were followed, in about twelve or fifteen seconds, by a pitter-patter sound very near us, caused by the descent of the stones which had been projected high into the air. Upon hearing these ominously close noises, the experienced guide exclaimed, “This won’t do—these stones are falling much too close; we must change our course, and that speedily, or it will fare worse with us.”

We had scarcely tacked ship, when another and

a louder explosion took place, accompanied by a still sterner shake of the mountain, the effect of both being very awful. Salvatore, now fully sensible of the danger we were in, called out in a resolute voice,

“Stand quite still; look upwards; but on no account move, except by a single step to the right or left, to avoid the stones which you will soon see falling on your heads!”

Fear is so great a disciplinarian, that both the man who had been pulling me up with his rope, and I myself, stood stock-still, as we were ordered by the chief guide, casting our eyes upwards, and looking as intently as we could into the fog. Presently a whizzing, angry sound, not unlike that of cannon-shot, gave intimation that the shower of stones was coming on. None struck any of the party, but they fell all round us in great numbers. I remarked one, fully larger than a man's head, which came whizzing down within a few inches of Salvatore's shoulder. The gallant veteran made no movement with his feet, but merely inclined himself a little on one side, while the red-hot globe whizzed past his head, and buried itself in the scorice within less than a yard of the spot where he stood!

Meanwhile my assistant and I, imitating Salvatore's movements, or rather his absence of move-

ment, remained fast for some seconds, while the fiery shower rained down on every hand; and by merely looking up as Salvatore desired us, we felt comparatively safe. It happened, however, unluckily, that a larger mass of lava than the rest was discovered by my companion whirling down from the sky, full upon his head, as he supposed, and without recollecting how much he augmented the danger, lost all his self-possession, and turning about, fairly scampered down the hill!

Notwithstanding the proverbially infectious nature of such example, I had no thought of budging, for I felt much too sensible of the danger in which we stood to trifle with our commanding-officer's orders. Accordingly, all might have gone right, had I not, in the course of the weary climb up the mountain, tried to relieve the fatigue of holding the cord in my hand, by tying it round my middle. When the shower of red-hot stones commenced, I never thought of untying the string, and therefore as soon as my companion turned tail, I was compelled, like one of the Siamese twins when his brother makes a run, to run for it likewise!

This flight took place, unfortunately, just at the thickest moment of the shower, and I could hear Salvatore calling out in despair, "Now you are both destroyed!" And how we managed to escape I know not; for the mist by this time had

come on so thick that we could see only a few yards before us, and the stones came thundering down on every side. I remember in my agony in vain trying to cast off the tow-rope, and equally in vain bawling out to the fellow to stand fast. The more I bawled the faster he ran, and I felt, in my rage, as if I could have rejoiced had a stone struck him and arrested his stupid career.

A few minutes brought us to the bottom of the slope, and then my friend, turning round, and thanking me for my charitable wish, to which I had given audible expression, burst into a loud laugh, and claimed my applause for having extricated both himself and me from the danger we had been in. Salvatore, however, who had by this time rejoined us, by no means relished this joke, and after bestowing on his countryman one of those emphatic scolds, in which the pith of half a score of maledictions is condensed into one untranslatable word, gave me one of his hands, and grasping that of the pusillanimous guide with the other, dragged us away in a direction opposite to the crater. Presently another explosion took place, followed by a shower of stones, which Salvatore, still holding us fast, forced us to contemplate steadily. None, however, fell within many yards of us upon this occasion, and by the time the next puff took place we were quite out of danger.

By thus following a circuitous path, we at length reached the highest point, or crest of the circumscribing cone of the ancient volcano, where we sat for upwards of two hours, at the distance of a quarter of a mile from the mouth of the huge furnace, which was vomiting forth smoke, flames, and red-hot stones, at intervals of six or eight minutes. What rendered all this particularly tantalising was the thickness of the mist, which so completely excluded the view, that although upwards of twenty grand explosions took place while we were in the best possible situation to see them, and many of which sensibly shook the mountain, we never saw a single one of them all ! The mist cleared away every now and then, but always showed us the crater as still and quiet as if no volcano existed there ; and scarcely was it shrouded again before its red-hot throat bellowed out its thunders, as if ten thousand bulls had been goaded into madness at one moment.

“ Ah ! ” said Salvatore, “ far different was this scene when, many years ago, I sat here, on this very spot, for six hours without intermission, in company with Professor Playfair of Edinburgh, watching the mountain in a similar state of activity. But the night was calm and clear ; and work enough I had to get the philosopher down again. Most travellers,” added Salvatore, “ cost me some

trouble to get them to the top, though few require to be urged to come down again. With Playfair, however, it was the reverse : and indeed," continued the energetic captain of the guides, "I really believe that, much as I love Vesuvius and all its concerns, the learned Scotch professor loved it as well. Perhaps, too," said the modest Salvatore, "Mr. Playfair, after a few weeks' study, may have understood what was going on here even better than I did, though I had passed my whole life on the mountain !"

CHAPTER VIII.

A PLEASURE VOYAGE TO SICILY FROM NAPLES.

IN the beautiful fragment by Gray, the pleasures arising from vicissitude are strongly expressed ; but the poet, from not having the good fortune to be a sailor, could not in his numbers describe a delight which, though to some it may appear trivial, matches any which even his glowing imagination could picture. I allude to a sudden change from living on land to living on sea, accompanied by a renovation of health and spirits.

It has often been my fortune to experience this transition in climates, where I was harassed by the heat, or worn to a shred by irksome duties ; and no one, who has not tried it, can understand the joyous relief of getting disentangled from all the worry and anxiety of an active intercourse with the world, and being in a moment cut off from general society, and left free to act and think at leisure, and without interruption. But when such change of scene is accompanied by the blessed change from

sickness to health—from blue devils to blue seas—from pain to ease, the enchantment is nearly complete, and requires nothing to make it so but fine weather, and the companionship of those whose sympathy, like money at compound interest, goes on augmenting the capital stock of happiness in a wonderful ratio.

I set out from Rome with my family in the Spring of 1834, in a miserable plight—rheumatic, dispirited, discontented; and if proof were wanting of the extent to which the body can exercise its tyranny over the mind, I should say that no better instance need be asked, than the fact of any person considering the first view of Naples, as he comes from the north, devoid of interest. The chemists ascertain whether or not an acid or an alkali be in their ingredient, by dipping into it what they call test-papers, and watching the change of colour which results. I would ask no truer test-paper of any one's health than the pages of his journal over such scenes as these; and I can scarcely believe my senses when I read my manuscript account of the journey alluded to, which appears to be written with bile, not ink.

The only exception I can find to this gloomy character of the journey from Rome to Naples, is when we touched upon Terracina, after driving for six hours through the Pontine marshes. As we

issued from that celebrated swamp, where the treacherous mal'aria appeared to be lying in silence to stab us to the heart, we were met by the refreshing influence of a rich sea-breeze, under a sun which warmed without scorching, and a sky just so much tempered by haze as to be without glare, yet losing none of its characteristic Italian beauty. We wound up the day by a walk along the sandy beach, round the curve of which the diminutive waves of the Mediterranean were just breaking, and that was all. It was little more than a ripple, indeed; but the continued sound of the tide biting into the sand—though its rise in those regions be only a few inches—sounded pleasantly to the ear of those who love the sea. It seemed that there had recently been a gale of wind from the south-west, for the whole shore was covered with sea-weed, some of which, cast far up by the breakers, lay dry and withered without any smell; while some, still lashing about in the surf, had evidently been only a little while before torn from its native rock, wherever that might be. Between these two lines there lay a narrow belt of this weed partially withered, extending along the coast as far as the eye could see. From this, a perfume, as sweet as that of violets just beginning to fade, rose gently up the slope, and was wafted to us by every puff of the expiring sea-breeze.

The sun went down as if in haste, while we were yet strolling on the coast, and then the moon, only one day short of the full, came dancing from the east, scattering along the surface of the sea a bright and unusually broad chain of spangles as far as the promontory of Gaeta. In proportion as the day declined, the moonlight, which fell on the surf, gave to the beach the appearance of being fringed with silver. On looking from our windows a few hours later, we found the scene again changed. The sea had now become the darkest, not the brightest part of the landscape; and instead of a belt of reflected light extending from the beach to the horizon, a remarkable bar, or bank, as it were, of moving sparks was stretched across the field of view in the distance, on a part of the surface where, probably, some accidental flaw of the incipient land-wind had fretted the sea into small undulations, while every other part lay as flat and black as if it had formed a portion of the great pitch-lake at Trinidad.

At about the centre of the curve, we could barely discover two groups of fishermen pulling in a prodigiously long net, with which they had swept half the little bay. As they drew it to land, the two parties at the ends gradually approached each other; while the action of the net passing through the water, produced a slight motion in the

surface above it, all round the edge. This belt being lighted by the moon, enabled us to watch its approach as distinctly as if each of the cork-floats of the net had had a lamp attached to it.

Even in the midst of the most picturesque scenery, we are apt to think of the affairs of that sad despot the belly; so I sent off my servant to watch the landing of the net, with instructions to buy a nice sole or some other fish for next morning's breakfast. Alas! the whole contents of the net consisted of a handful of shrimps!

The lambent flame of interest excited by the scenery of Terracina soon went out, and, such is the effect of sickness, that I looked even at the infinitely more magnificent prospect of the bay of Naples with scarcely a feeling of pleasure. It is true, I had seen it all before; but, generally speaking, the more frequently we see such a place, the more it rises in our imagination. I therefore felt grieved and angry with myself when I came in sight of Vesuvius, and of the noble range of mountains south of it, — the birth-place and favourite haunt of Salvator Rosa,—guarding the noblest of bays, fringed with those most picturesque of towns—Portici, Torre del Greco, and Castellamare—and lastly, the most graceful of all, Naples itself, with a horizon ornamented by the islands of Capri, Ischia, and Procida. Seeing all this at my

feet, I felt as indifferent as if I had been overlooking a swamp in the Netherlands. I do not know which is the greater misfortune of the two—to be reduced by illness to such a pitch of apathy as to view a scene like this without emotion, or to have a mind and taste so constituted that its beauties shall at any time fail to produce pleasure.

There is an intermediate, and rather perverse position in which some people place themselves, from whence everything is wilfully seen to disadvantage, by reason of depreciating contrasts with objects at a distance, with little or no reference to the intrinsic merits of the spot itself, and of this we had an amusing instance about that time.

Shortly before leaving Rome on this trip to the south, I received a letter from an intelligent friend whose misfortune, as I must esteem it, was to mar much of his enjoyment wherever he went,—not from any deficiency in his powers of perception, but in their misapplication. When speaking of the beautiful, or, at all events, curiously-situated Lake of Albano, the half-full crater of an ancient volcano, surrounded by rugged peaks, once the mouthpieces of furious eruptions, but now a scene of the richest fertility, he wrote me thus:—“The Lake of Albano,” says he, “is no more like the Irish lakes than I to Hercules; nor, indeed,” adds he, “in any respect so beautiful as the sheet

of water in Kensington Gardens, with its magnificent margin of giant trees ! ”

Further on in the same letter, my friend professes himself of Goldsmith’s faith, who says—

“ Where’er we roam,
Our first, best country ever is at home ; ”

a sentiment I shall not quarrel with, but why should it be made the source of dissatisfaction with such glorious scenes as those with which Italy is so rife? “ Naples ! ” he exclaims, “ boasted Naples ! what is it to Brighton, with its propriety, architecture of a higher order, and a sea boundless, and not penned up as at Naples with little shoals or islands, which may be pretty, but not grand enough to elevate the mind.”

What a description is this of one of the noblest bays in the wide world ! I have seen a few in my day, and many of them both grand and beautiful, but none to dispossess Naples of the first place in my respectful admiration, all things considered. For in estimating such a scene, nothing should be left out ; not only the sea and the islands should be taken in, but the volcano, the brilliant town, the still more brilliant sky, the rich vineyards, and, above all, the classical associations which crowd even on the unlearned imagination, to whatever quarter it turns of that landscape, consecrated both

by ancient and modern poetry, and riveted in the memory by the whole course of history.

It is extremely curious to remark how much all this question of admiration is matter of experience, and how certain it is that a portion of time must elapse before we learn to know what it is we are looking at. I remember hearing a gentleman mention that on arriving at Naples he was all the day on the look-out for Vesuvius, and not happening to see anything which squared with his preconceived notions of that mountain, he remained under the impression that it lay beyond the hills, and, consequently, that he was on what he called the wrong side of the ridge. After sunset, he walked through the motley confusion of streets which conducted him to the mole, and, looking up, he saw a cloud, which, from its being the only one in the otherwise serene expanse of the heavens, attracted his notice. When the night set in, he saw under this cloud something which he thought was a mountain bonfire, but which he soon discovered to be the "Vero Vesuvio," with a fine stream of lava running down its sides !

When we arrived at Naples, a superb eruption had just ceased ; but had we not been too late, I am afraid that even the fiery excitement of such a scene would have proved ineffectual to rouse me from the lethargy into which I had been plunged

by swallowing the atmosphere of Rome, so renovating to most people, but to me most noxious.

I was in hopes for some days that the change of climate might do me good ; but as I only got worse and worse at Naples, I resolved to change the scene entirely. In this view, I set agoing inquiries as to the possibility of getting away to Sicily. Were that beautiful island happily in the hands of people somewhat more energetic than the proverbially lazy Neapolitans, there would certainly be a steam-vessel every day from Naples to Palermo ; and once a week another might start on a tour of the island. As things are now managed, such voyages are not only few, slow, and expensive, but, what is worse, so irregular that no one can be certain of their going at all, and thus we are apt to lose patience, time, and cash. Accordingly, I began to fear that if I trusted to steam for changing my air, I might exchange air for earth, and be snug in my grave before the day of starting came ; so I resolved to try some less uncertain method than steam, and to hire a sailing-vessel, should I discover one to my mind.

The very thought of going to sea again did me more good in half a day than the doctor and all his drugs had done in a week, and the excitement consequent upon the search for a suitable vessel almost superseded the necessity of going afloat. I do not

know, indeed, that I should ever have succeeded single-handed ; but an obliging friend having undertaken to help me, I was soon suited, and struck a bargain with Signor Giovanni, captain of the Neapolitan brig Palermo, who was described to me as being a reasonable person, and one who, without bothering us, would pay attention to his vessel, and carry us safely wherever we wished to go.

It was at first verbally agreed, and then formally covenanted, that I should be received on board, with my family ; that we should be taken first to Palermo, then to Messina, Catania, Syracuse, Girgenti, and so on to Malta, and back again, all for the sum of six hundred ducats, or about a hundred guineas. The captain reckoned that it might occupy about two months to make this cruise, including twenty-five days of stoppages at the above-mentioned places, the duration of the stay at each to be regulated by ourselves. Thus, in a rough way, we calculated that we should remain at Palermo four days, at Messina three, five at Catania (to give time for seeing Mount Etna), two at Syracuse, two at Girgenti, and nine at Malta. The captain undertook to victual the whole party for eight ducats a day while we were at sea, but in harbour we were to provision ourselves. A good cook was provided, and a nanny-goat for milk ; and a new set of beds and bedding were insisted upon,

—a stipulation the value of which will be readily understood by those who have voyaged and travelled in Italy and the seas adjacent.

On our way to the mole in order to conclude these nautical arrangements we accidentally fell in with the cortége of the King and Queen of Naples, a party filling nine carriages, each drawn by six horses, besides outriders, soldiers, and running footmen, all on their way to the church of St. Januarius. We, of course, gave up our other business and followed in their Majesties' wake as well as we could, and entered the church with the crowd, little hoping to be so fortunate as we proved to be, for we not only saw the blood of the saint in a phial, but beheld quite as much of the miraculous liquefaction thereof as the king, queen, or any other member of the congregation. This was the only thing in the way of sight-seeing which we indulged in,—or, rather, which we had energy enough to witness on this passing visit. We took, indeed, no great liking to Naples; an effect caused, in some degree, by ill health, for not one of the party was quite well; but it may be ascribable also, in a great measure, to the nature of the place. There are some towns, like some people, to which we attach ourselves at first sight, and for ever; while it costs us a long time to become acquainted or interested in others. In spite of the surpassing beauty of

Naples, and the comparative plainness in the looks of Rome, I should say that vastly more persons fall in love at once, and that desperately, with the charms of the eternal city than with the far more showy beauties of Naples.

After four days of preparation and impatience, we embarked in the good brigantine Palermo, at sunset, on a fine May-day evening; but it was not till late at night before we cast off the warp which held us to the buoy, near the end of the mole, off which we lay. A fine land-breeze had been blowing from Vesuvius for several hours before; but the dilatory captain had still some business to transact on shore—some endless last words to speak, and so the time was lost. In the true spirit of Neapolitan procrastination, he had made an attempt the day before to put off the time of sailing. I resisted this, however; for, independently of my nautical prejudices against sailing on a Friday, I felt it of considerable consequence to let Don Giovanni know, as early as possible, that although he was captain of the ship, I was to be master of the ship's movements, and that our contract was by no means to be treated as a piece of waste paper.

Just as we were proceeding to let go the line, it was discovered that our promised nanny-goat was not on board; upon which I insisted on their holding fast the hawser, and despatching a boat on

shore; for though goat's-milk be but a shabby substitute for cow's-milk, it is many degrees better than none at all. On summoning the captain aft, I made the fitting remonstrances in the best Italian I could muster; in reply to which he told a long story about the Government being hostile to the export of goats, sheep, and such stock, and that if my nanny were brought off, it must be clandestinely. I said I should be no party to any underhand transaction, but that, unless the goat were presently brought on board the ship, I should land my whole party again. I then made him man his boat, and insisted upon his sending one of his people on shore with me to the custom-house, where it was alleged the difficulty originated. On reaching this purgatory of travellers, I found the whole affair, as is usual in such cases, a matter of moonshine, but got up for very intelligible purposes. After a little battling, I overcame the difficulties and returned on board with Mrs. Nanny-goat, in triumph, suspended, like the golden fleece, over the shoulders of the steward. This early determination to stick to the letter of our agreement had such a good effect on our skipper, that during the whole voyage we never had another word of difference.

Once under weigh, we slipped off so quietly that it might have been thought—and indeed it was believed by some of the least experienced among us,

that we were still lying within the mole long after we were at sea. The dew, with which the air was saturated, had damped the sails from the earing of the royal to the clew of the foresail; so that as the breeze gradually freshened, and the brigantine drew rapidly out of the bay, the canvas was prevented from flapping and making a noise against the shrouds and masts. Towards the morning, however, the land-wind fell, and the sails, now quite drenched, hung dripping from the yards, flat and useless. A very light air did, indeed, occasionally belly out the loftiest sails, and these flaws, which at any other time, or had the water not been as smooth as a sheet of glass, might have had no effect in impelling the vessel, gave her just headway enough to bring her under command of the rudder, and to produce, under the bows, a faint ripple, scarcely distinguishable to the ear, but visible enough to the eye. This was caused by a shining appearance of the water in those seas, not unlike melted silver, when the stem of a vessel, or the blade of an oar, divides it for an instant.

By noon next day we had made fifty miles of our distance to Palermo, which I think is about 180. I satisfied myself on this point by making an observation with the captain's quadrant—a wretched old concern, which reminded me of the instruments used in the days of Dampier, and strangely con-

trasted with the elegant sextants and circles which even the middies of modern times are wont to handle. The weather continued equally fine all the way, and the water nearly as smooth as we had left it in the bay of Naples; so that even with a very light wind, we stole along so fast, that on the morning of the third day I found, on going upon deck at daybreak, that we had sailed eight or ten miles past the island of Ustica, and brought the high land of Sicily in sight. I felt happy to get something to look at which was new to my eyes; for almost everything I had seen since leaving England, except the Rhine, had lost the charm of novelty—perhaps the chief charm which belongs to most places. There are certainly many scenes which improve essentially in interest at each successive inspection, just as there are some people whom we esteem more and more at every interview; but the instances are rare, and it may safely be said of most persons and places, that we have no great wish to see them a second time.

The great sea, indeed, whether it be viewed in the open ocean—the Atlantic or Pacific—or in such mighty inland waters as the Mediterranean, is essentially so boundless in its beautiful varieties, that no one ever becomes tired of looking at it. A sea-sick passenger may, it is true, wish to get again on land, but I speak of those who

have no such weakness; and I would ask, who is there that does not discover in it fresh charms and fresh objects of interest at every trial? On this occasion the effect on me was so marvellous, that I had not been 24 hours on the water, before nearly all the maladies which annoyed me for months before had vanished. A touch of chronic rheumatism alone remained, and I felt that, but for the slight lameness which it left, I could have climbed Mount Etna, the top of which the captain (who swore he saw it) was in vain endeavouring to point out to me, under the pretty name of Mongibello, by which it is universally known in Sicily.

It was an immense comfort, too, to find how pleasantly we were situated on board our pretty little yacht; how unusually clean everything was, and without that sickening smell, which, owing to the cargo, generally contradistinguishes merchant vessels from ships-of-war. The captain, who we were rejoiced to see was a man of few words, being the least intrusive of mortals, did not even come on his own quarter-deck unless invited, or unless there happened to be duty going on! The crew, like their padrone, appeared sober, decent, quiet personages, as different as need be from the reckless, rollicking, blue-jackets of colder latitudes. The cook, that prime minister to the body politic, turned out a far better "artiste" than we had expected.

The steward, also, on whose capacity and attention so much of the comfort of a ship-life depends, proved himself a good sample of that singular class. The cabins were sufficiently spacious and commodious, the motions of the vessel easy, the wind always fair, the water always smooth, and the climate as fine as the warmest imagination could have pictured of an Italian sea in the month of May.

CHAPTER IX.

PALERMO.—PICKLED MONKS.—CAVE OF ST. CIRO.
—THE RESULT OF GEOLOGICAL INQUIRIES.

As we were all once more in health and spirits, we made the voyage a party of pleasure, and not, as it too generally is, a bore which it is a happiness to get over as quickly as possible. Having spread an awning over-head, and stretched a flag on the deck, we soon furnished our drawing-room with chairs, tables, and pillows, and not only amused ourselves in reading and working, but took all our meals in the air, and often sat till near midnight. Accordingly, it was rather a disappointment than a satisfaction to us, that the sea-breeze lasted long enough to carry us into Palermo, and to moor us in the snuggest little cove of a place that ever was seen, only large enough to hold a dozen vessels, at some distance from the principal mole, or artificial harbour, so characteristic of the Mediterranean ports. In this sheltered nook, where the water reposed as smoothly as if it had lain in the centre of

a pleasure-ground, all the surrounding objects—most of which were beautiful, and some very magnificent—were seen in reflection as distinctly as when viewed directly.

There is probably no place in the world—none, at least, which I recollect—where every object is more striking than those which form the scenery of Palermo. I speak chiefly of the mountains, for the town itself, unlike Naples, being built on a level plain, or one very slightly inclined, makes no great show, till you enter the streets, and then, to be sure, the appearance is remarkable. Mrs. Starke, in her well-known Road Book, speaks of the Asiatic appearance of Palermo; but I suspect from this remark that my late worthy old friend had never been herself in the East. No doubt the town has something rather Moorish in its look, which may pass with a cockney for Asiatic, though certainly the two things are not quite the same; at all events, its appearance reminded me much more of some Spanish and Portuguese towns, than of any Oriental cities with which I am acquainted. All this might be expected when we consider the intimate relations which so long existed between Sicily and the Moorish states of Africa, as well as with the peninsulas of Spain and Italy.

A great air of gaiety seemed to be spread over everything at Palermo, and the crowds of pretty

and prettily-dressed people in the streets looked uncommonly well pleased with themselves. The sun was setting, or rather had set about a quarter of an hour, when we walked from our hotel to a gigantic quay, or public walk; and in my life I never saw such gorgeous tints as the beginning of the twilight cast on the mountains in the eastern and northern directions. But in truth we scarcely knew on which side to look, or what to admire most, so splendid and various was the whole circuit. Even overhead the sky assumed a degree of beauty akin to that lower down, and such as, though it may be partially seen in other quarters of the world, is seldom witnessed on such a scale as in Sicily.

It is odd enough that in the whole course of my naval service, though I have repeatedly visited some of the most noxious districts of the globe, I never had happened to be placed in quarantine; and as the first regular examination to which I was ever subjected took place at Palermo, though coming from the healthy port of Naples, I may be allowed, once for all, to say a word or two upon its details, which may be as new to others as they were then to me. We became abundantly familiar with them in a short time, for, although ours was a coasting voyage, and no sickness, or suspicion of sickness, existed anywhere on the island, we were

subjected at every stage of our progress to as searching a scrutiny as if we had come from Smyrna or Constantinople with the plague on board!

Instead of being allowed to step into a boat and land at once, on dropping the anchor, we were commanded to remain till the sails were furled, and the ship put to rights. We were then mustered into the long-boat, captain, crew, passengers, and all, excepting only one individual sailor, left as ship-keeper. Having landed in a body, close to the Sanita, or health-office, the captain desired us to halt at the edge of the wharf, and advanced with his clean bill of health in one hand, and his ship's papers in the other. He was met by a very solemn functionary, with a most atrabilious, yellow-fever sort of visage, who, by means of a long pair of tongs stretched out at arm's-length, cautiously grasped the documents held towards him by the captain. It would not be a bad trick to place a charged Leyden jar among the papers, and to watch the looks of the health-officer as he received the shock, which he would fancy was the concentrated essence of plague, pestilence and famine, come upon him at once! Our good skipper had no such Etonian freaks in his thoughts, but stood with all proper awe while his papers were subjected to the process of fumigation in the adjacent court,—one of the dirtiest-looking holes I ever peeped into, and fit of itself

to breed more diseases than the health-office, with its tedious formalities, will ever keep out. Unfortunately this fiery process was carried a little too far, so that the clerk, when called upon to read the scorched paper, could scarcely make out our names, as he mustered us one by one, and made us pass in review before a grated window, which separated the cautious authorities from the possibility of contagion.

After about half-an-hour of this precious tomfoolery we were declared free, and “pratique,” as it is technically called, being given us, we were allowed to walk into the city without being shunned like so many mad dogs. I was glad that we got away without being involved in a scrape with those solemn personages the Sanita officers; for one of my little girls laughed so immoderately at the affair of the tongs, that had I not forced myself to look very grave on the matter, and reprove the child, we might have been unpleasantly dealt with.

The perversity and folly of all the nations forming the borders of the Mediterranean Sea, on the subject of quarantine, as a means of preventing the introduction of disease, are beyond the belief of persons who have not visited those countries. In truth, the fear of the plague amounts to a disease of itself, probably, on the whole, worse in its effects than the malady when it comes. It is believed

by the best informed on such subjects that most diseases, if not the plague, might be defied by proper precautions, widely different, however, from those of the Sanita office, and without exposing not merely passengers, but whole cities to an infinite degree of trouble. This subject of quarantine, however, is so completely the darling hobby of all the states in that part of the world, that I fear it is in vain to hope for any amendment of the system. I could relate many stories of what those who have not been accustomed to such things would consider very absurd; but I shall merely relate one anecdote which I know to be true. It occurred at Naples when I was there, and was told me by a gentleman on whom I can rely.

He pointed out to me two ships which had been sent to the quarantine-ground, although they had come direct from England, where it was not even pretended that the cholera or any other infectious epidemical disease prevailed. It appeared, however, that there existed some suspicion of the cholera having broken out at Gibraltar, and though these ships did not touch there, the Neapolitan board of health, in their wisdom, settled it as a possible case that the disease might have been wafted on board by the land wind, as the ships passed through the Straits! My friend, who was interested in these

vessels, naturally remonstrated with some impatience against the hurtful delay to which his goods were exposed, by being kept out of the market. Upon which one of the solemn coxcombs of the Sanita office cut him short, and asked him, “Why he had not ordered his ships to come from Liverpool instead of London?”

“How would that have mended the matter?” inquired my friend.

“Surely,” quoth this learned Italian geographer, “those vessels coming to Italy from Liverpool, *not having to enter the Straits of Gibraltar*, would not be exposed to the risk, and consequent detention of which you complain!”

To do the Neapolitans justice, however, it must be owned that they punish and worry themselves quite as much as they do strangers. At the time I speak of, when steam-vessels were in the highest requisition at Naples, in consequence, I believe, of the feast of Sta. Rosalia at Palermo, a new boat arrived from England, and great was the joy of the inhabitants, who thought they would now surely find a passage to Sicily. What was their disappointment, then, to see the newly-arrived steam-boat sent round to the quarantine-ground; and to learn that, for having called at Gibraltar for coals, she was doomed to undergo forty days of purification,

long before the expiration of which, the chief object for which she had been hurried out from England would have been past !

Our first trip at Palermo was to the Palazzo Reale, on the top of which, in the old fashion, the observatory is placed : in modern times they are built on the ground, where alone they can be free from the tremor to which all buildings, especially if they be lofty, are liable. My object was to reach the observatory before Signor Cacciatore, the astronomer—a well-known name—should leave the palace, and I just succeeded, for with his hat on his head and cane in hand, he was making his escape, after taking the meridian observation ; but he immediately turned back, and we entered the observatory together.

I found, much to my disappointment, that he spoke no French, and moreover was very deaf ; while, on the other side, I spoke very little Italian, and that little none of the best. Nevertheless, we got on charmingly, and by that freemasonry of science which is common to all languages and climates, contrived to maintain a most interesting conversation (interesting and instructive to me, at least,) for more than an hour.

Most people are aware that the celebrated astronomer Piazzi discovered the small planet Ceres at Palermo, in this very observatory, with an instru-

ment of Ramsden's, which we had the satisfaction of seeing. This important discovery led the way almost immediately to several others of a similar nature. It was made on the 1st of January, 1801, at which period the present astronomer, Cacciatore, was Piazzzi's assistant in the observatory of which he is now the chief. As Piazzzi was at that time engaged in making the noble catalogue of the stars, which has since become so well known, he placed himself at the telescope and observed the stars as they passed the meridian, while Cacciatore wrote down the times, and the polar distances, as they were read off by his chief.

Certain stars passed the wires, and were recorded as usual on the 1st of January, 1801. On the next night, when the same part of the heavens came under review, several of the stars observed the evening before were again looked at and their places recorded. Of these, however, there was one which did not fit the position assigned to it on the previous night, either in right ascension or in declination.

"I think," said Piazzzi to his companion, "you must, accidentally, have written down the time of that star's passage, and its distance from the pole, incorrectly."

"To this," said Cacciatore, who told me the story, "I made no reply, but took especial pains

to set down the next evening's observations with great care. On the third night there again occurred a discordance, and again a remark from Piazzi that an erroneous entry had probably been made by me of the place of the star. I was rather piqued at this," said Cacciatore, "and respectfully suggested that possibly the error lay in the observation, not in the record."

"Under these circumstances, and both parties being now fully awakened as to the importance of the result, we watched for the transit of the disputed star with great anxiety on the fourth night. When lo, and behold! it was again wide of the place it had occupied in the heavens on the preceding and all the other nights on which it had been observed."

"Oh ho!" cried the delighted Piazzi, "we have found a planet while we thought we were observing a fixed star; let us watch it more attentively."

The result soon confirmed this conjecture, and thus was made one of the most interesting, and I may say useful, astronomical discoveries of modern times; since it obviously led the way, almost immediately, to that of the three other telescopic planets,—Pallas, by Olbers, on the 28th March, 1802, Juno, by Harding, on the 1st September, 1804, and Vesta, also by Olbers, on the

29th March, 1807. All these four minor planets, it may be observed, which lie between Mars and Jupiter, are nearly equidistant from the sun, the nearest, Vesta, being at about twice and a quarter further from the sun than the earth is, and the most remote, viz., Pallas, being at about twice and three quarters of our distance from the sun. While speaking of these things it may be well to mention that Uranus, or the Georgian, the planet discovered by Sir William Herscheil on the 13th of March, 1781, is also telescopic, that is to say, it is visible only by the aid of a glass. Its distance from the sun is upwards of nineteen times greater than that of the earth.

At first sight it might seem as if the discovery of Ceres, above described, were accidental, and therefore that less credit was due than is generally given to Piazzi for this service rendered to astronomy. But a little reflection will show that his success is entirely ascribable to a series of patient and exact observations, conducted by a man of knowledge and skill, familiarised by long experience with his subject, and of good faith in his records, seeking only for the truth.

We next examined the church or chapel in the same palace, which is ornamented with a profusion of mosaic-work, dated so far back as the 12th century (1129). Mrs. Starke obligingly informs her

readers that it is a "chaste building of the Greco-Araba-Normanna school." What the plague school may this be?

After breakfast next day we drove to Monreale, a small town on an elevated situation among the hills, inland from the city and port of Palermo, commanding a magnificent view of both, together with the intermediate level country. Monreale is four miles from the town, and contains a very curious old cathedral, built in 1177, by William the Good, whoever that worthy may have been. The interior is interesting in its antique way; but we enjoyed still more the glorious view from the top of the building, which no one should omit to climb.

On our way back to town we called at the Capuchin convent, where, in the catacombs under the church, we were shown a vast number of defunct monks, reduced by pickling and drying to a horrid sort of mummy. But the skeleton variety predominated; and anything more disgusting to look at, or to approximate within range of the other senses, I never beheld. We hurried up-stairs again, and drove to Palermo as fast as if we had been chased by the ghosts of the whole convent.

As a live monk, in hot weather, in a close apartment, is certainly not the most agreeable company in the world, I cannot comprehend the taste which

aggravates this characteristic annoyance by exposing a monk's body, frowsy at best, above-ground after death ! The ancient mummies of Egypt are well-dried, spiced, and wrapped up in cere-cloths. Even the heads of the modern New-Zealanders, though how preserved I know not, are as innocent of smell as any barber's block. On the other side of the world, too, I have seen the bodies of the Incas or ancient inhabitants of Peru, dug out of the sandy soil in a state of perfect preservation, no great beauties, it is true, but still their flesh is completely desiccated. But, oh save me from the half-dried monks of Palermo ! who as if to add mockery to a scene already absurd enough, are stuck up in rows, and dressed in the identical cowls and hoods they wore when alive.

On regaining the fresh air at Palermo, we enjoyed with double relish the delicious perfume from the roses, oranges, and myrtles of a beautiful garden called La Flora ; where, among tastefully laid out walks, shady bowers, groves of thickly-planted fruit trees, and innumerable sweet-smelling shrubs, for which Sicily is famous, as well as a profusion of flowers, box hedges, and grassy banks, interspersed with busts of Archimedes and other celebrated men of antiquity whom Sicily had produced, we laboured to efface the odour and the other hideous impressions left by the badly preserved Capucini.

In somewhat of a different style is another garden which we visited, the owner of which has a passion for gardening, but he detests straight lines to such a degree that the whole ground appears like one great labyrinth. In the same taste a professed labyrinth occupies the centre of all, of such excessive intricacy, and guarded by such high hedges, that no mortal, without a clew, could ever hope to get out, if once involved in its windings. In rambling over the garden we fell occasionally upon hermitages with closed doors, on opening which we were startled by the appearance of full-sized anchorites, busy with books before them, put in motion by clock-work. At other places, when tempted to disobey the injunction, “non aprite,” —“don’t open!”—a shower of water, squirted full in our faces, punished our curiosity.

Nothing, I admit, looks more childish in description than such trickery, or more questionable, according to our taste, than this tortuous and fantastic method of laying out a garden; but it is wonderful to observe how much in character such vagaries look in Sicily, where almost everything is got up for show and effect, and where the climate, the scenery, the extravagant luxuriance of the vegetation, and the more than semi-Asiatic luxury, and voluptuous manners of the inhabitants, conspire to place everything in a different position

from what it occupies in colder and less brilliant and imaginative parts of the world. Such a state of things as we find even in modern Sicily renders many circumstances which would be ridiculous elsewhere, very excusable, and even amusing, when associated with historical recollections.

The sea voyage, the sea air, and the excitement of these new scenes, had so wonderfully restored the elasticity of my spirits, that, but for the lingering traces of rheumatic weakness in one leg, I felt equal to any exertion. But when I attempted one morning to make an excursion to Monte Pelegrino in the immediate neighbourhood of Palermo, I was obliged to give it up entirely, and having dismounted from my donkey, contented myself with a view of that classical promontory from a distance. It is a fine, bold, mountainous rock, precipitous on most sides, and rising to the height of nearly two thousand feet above the level of the sea, at the western extremity of the port, where an ancient author says it is planted like a huge dragon, as a sentinel to guard the entrance of the bay. Palermo, then called Panormus, (which I believe means deep bay,) was no less a favourite with the poets than it was with the warriors of Carthage and Rome, who contested so long for the mastery of Sicily.

The enthusiastic guide, nothing daunted by my

inability to mount a horse, urged me to get into that strangest of conveyances, a letiga, and promised to point out the very position which Hamilcar occupied for three years on Monte Pelegrino against all the power of the Romans. But even this prospect proved ineffectual, for I found the cramped posture of the letiga worse even than that of the freedom of the saddle. So we took a regular carriage, and keeping to the low ground and comparatively good roads, drove to the cave of San Ciro, a few miles east of Palermo.

This singular cavern, though now far above the level of the sea, was evidently at one time on the very shore, and exposed to the action of the waves. This fact is not a mere piece of geological reasoning, but is quite obvious to the senses of any person who has been accustomed to look at a rocky coast, however little he may have speculated on the geological mutations of the earth's surface.

The cave of San Ciro, at its top, and for about half way down its sides, is rough, and unworn except by the trickling of small streams, which find their way through the crevices in the limestone-rock, of which the whole of that range of mountains is composed. The formation of stalactites and other calcareous coatings on the top and sides of the cave, together with the angular texture of their surface, clearly show that they must have

been beyond the reach of the waves, even at the time of the highest tides. But the bottom of the cave, and the lower portions of the walls, are rounded and smoothed in such a manner, that no one who has ever examined a sea-washed cavern at the base of a cliff when the tide was out, could for an instant doubt that the dressing, as it is called, which these rocks had received, was the work of the waves. To my eye, indeed, the evidence of the marine origin of this ancient cave was quite as palpable as that afforded by the appearances in any ordinary sea-worn cavern of our own day.

The whole aspect of the place reminded me much of a similar scene at Dunglass, on the coast of East Lothian, the resemblance being heightened by the rock in both cases being bored by the animals called *Lithodomi*, which make clean round holes in limestone at or near the surface of the water. These remarkable perforations are in such numbers in the cave of San Ciro, that some traveller says the face of the rock resembles an old target which has been well peppered by musket-shot; and they complete the evidence that this portion of the cliffs, though now upwards of a mile from the beach, and nearly 200 feet above the level of the sea, was once a portion of the coast, laved by the Mediterranean.

So far all is plain sailing, for it is not difficult to

conceive that this part of the coast, after being scooped out by the action of the waves, and drilled by the *Lithodomi*, should have been raised to its present position by subterranean forces similar to those which we know to be still in such vigorous action in Sicily. But what are we to make of, or how account for, the existence in this cave of an immense quantity of bones of the Mammoth and other extinct animals, forming, together with a dark-brown calcareous cement, what is called an osseous breccia? The cave may have been the habitation of the animals of which these are the remains; or they may have been washed into it, as Mr. Lyell suggests, by the waters of engulfed rivers.

In whatever way these things may be explained theoretically, the facts themselves are particularly striking, and well worthy of the attention of visitors, from the palpable manner in which they tell a portion, at all events, of their story. Generally speaking, in pursuing geological inquiries, a certain degree of education in the science is essential before almost any actual observation becomes either useful or agreeable. Very often it is necessary to possess a large amount of faith in principles, gradually imbibed from a contemplation of the steady manner in which nature works, and to study the bold generalisations of honest speculators, that

this noble science may be freed from complication and mystery. But the cave of San Ciro, in some of the most important particulars of its geological history is so intelligible even to the least instructed and least imaginative, that it should never be left unvisited by any person who delights in contemplating the operations of nature in by-gone ages.

There is no one so insensible to what is wonderful and grand, as to behold with indifference either an earthquake or an eruption of a volcano; occasions when, it may be said, we witness the very touch of the Almighty's hand! On the one we see the disruption of the most solid strata of the earth; on the other their reproduction. These phenomena every one feels, and admits to be worthy of his highest admiration, and experience only renders them more and more awful to witness. Nothing, indeed, can be more striking than the solemn dread with which the inhabitants at the foot of the Andes in Chili and Peru watch the first symptoms of an earthquake; nor was I less struck with the intense interest excited in the streets of Naples, even among the lowest and least thoughtful of mortals, the Lazzaroni, by the sight of Vesuvius vomiting forth streams of lava, though every one of the inhabitants must have witnessed the same thing before.

Now, these scenes, even in the countries where they are of the most frequent occurrence, fall still more frequently within the range of the geologist's observation, and under circumstances of still greater interest, because, though possessed of equal sublimity, they are divested of the danger, the losses, and the wide-spread misery by which actual eruptions and earthquakes are generally accompanied. The geologist at every step sees evidences of these stupendous incidents as palpable as if he felt the ground rock under him, or saw the melted stone flowing at his feet. And what is even more interesting, his practised eye can see these, and many other no less magnificent phenomena in combination, and often under circumstances which by no possibility could be presented to his view during a life of the most active observation of the surface of the earth. He cannot dive to the bottom of the deep sea, which covers more than half of the globe; nor can he enter the bowels of the earth to witness the workings of the internal fire; nor can he inspect in person as they are successively formed the myriads of small layers constituting the mighty deltas lying at the mouths of those great rivers, whose floods have carried down to the sea the wrecks of the mountains and valleys through which they have passed during the lapse of countless ages. But the geologist, by zealously

and honestly studying the different parts of the surface which are laid open to his inspection, and by duly comparing one with another, and by a legitimate train of bold generalisations, can really command not only a view of all those things, but a much more advantageous view of them, and be able to speculate upon them with more certainty, than if he could have been present at their occurrence, which in most cases is utterly impossible.

The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling, by glancing from heaven to earth — from earth to heaven, does the work of imagination admirably. But the geologist often beats the poet even on his own ground, and claims the aid of the imagination with still greater success. In the solid strata of the Alps or Andes, his reason can distinctly read of numberless past worlds and oceans; of alternate continents and seas, which must have existed in some epoch of the globe; of rivers which have ceased to flow; of lakes now filled up and dry; of volcanos whose fires are extinct. All these he beholds in full action,—some destroying continents and islands — some reproducing them. Nor is it merely a trace here and there which he discovers of the working of these agents, but their whole history is often as palpably, and even more completely laid before him

than in the most accessible parts of the earth he inhabits.

To those who have examined any extensive districts of country, with a hammer in their hands, all this must be well known ; though it might be difficult to furnish satisfactory illustrations on a great scale to those who have not had this advantage. To such persons an apparently trivial instance will perhaps help to explain what is meant by the superior advantages which the geologist often enjoys for inquiring into the secrets of nature, over those who confine their researches to what is actually passing under their eye.

There are certain circumstances of great interest connected with the growth of trees, which, as I understand, had baffled the investigation of botanists, just as there are some points in the structure of the human body which, up to this time, have defied the skill of anatomists to unravel, or even in some cases to form the remotest guess of their purposes. The principle of life in both cases interferes to prevent the requisite degree of examination of the phenomena. It has happened, however, of late years, that certain woods have been found in a fossil state, so completely silicified, or turned into flint, that they may be cut into slices of such exceeding thinness, as to allow of the transmission of light through parts otherwise opaque.

Then by applying powerful microscopes to these slices of fossil wood, a searching kind of observation becomes not only possible, but easy, which, in the case of the living tree, would be totally out of the question. The result is, that discoveries have been made of things which had been only conjectured before, as well as others which had been totally unsuspected. These facts have been, as it were, congealed at the moment of their operation, and in that state they may now be examined, and compared at leisure, either with one another or with existing living specimens, by which both are illustrated, and many points mutually explained which had previously been ambiguous.

It is exactly the same with geological researches on the great scale. Innumerable doubtful points in the earth's history, which no mere observation of the current facts of the day could have explained, have been elucidated by the examination of organic remains of extinct species, and by the careful examination of series of strata super-imposed on each other, in various parts of the globe, under such a variety of circumstances as to leave no doubt of the soundness of the generalisation by which they are all referred to one and the same set of laws.

It seems, accordingly, to be at length pretty generally admitted, that to the indefinitely pro-

longed action of the causes now in existence every geological phenomenon may be ascribed, and thus the same uniformity of Nature's handiwork appears to be almost as fully established in the complicated and, at first sight, confused science of Geology, as it is in Astronomy—the most exact of all.

CHAPTER X.

MESSINA.—VOYAGE TO MALTA.

HAVING spent our allotted time at Palermo, we resolved to sail on a certain evening, whatever the weather might prove,—a stupid resolution certainly, since it obliged us, as we thought, though there was not the smallest necessity for our moving, to re-embark in our brigantine in one of those pelt-ing, pitiless showers which lying travellers tell us are to be met with only between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, but which I can vouch for having often witnessed, as hard, between Charing Cross and Temple Bar. The rain drowned the land wind so effectually that we could not get out of our little mole before five in the morning, when we let fall our dripping sails and stole away from the fairest of fair cities, with an air of wind so light, that the most fastidious poet, wishing to fan the cheek of his love, might have borrowed such a zephyr without disturbing a ringlet of her hair. The mountain-tops, including that of Etna, were cum-

bered heavily with rain clouds, and far off, in the horizon, we could see squalls, prowling about like sea monsters riding on the waters, seeking for stray ships to drag down to their coral caves.

Little recked Don Giovanni, our captain, of such images; and under his pilotage we glided along shore most agreeably, till the deep calm which intervenes between the land and the sea breeze, fell upon us. We cared nothing, however, for this delay. As a matter of bargain we had it not to pay for, since the time employed in sailing from port to port was not reckoned against us; so long, therefore, as the weather was fine, the sea smooth, and the plague of sea-sickness not amongst us, we felt as happy, and perhaps happier, afloat than on shore. This may seem a paradox to some persons,—to others a truism,—but to those who have the misfortune to be lame of a leg, as I was at that time, it will easily be understood how great a pleasure it was to have the advantage of seeing a new country, so beautiful in itself as Sicily, close at hand, without any expenditure of bodily labour. Independently of this, it is always delightful, I think, to sail along any shore at no great distance from the beach, if the weather be fine; and I may safely say, that there are few coasts which offer more bold or varied features than the north coast of that celebrated island. Meanwhile the children

scampered about the decks, and enjoyed the voyage fully as much as their active little fancies had anticipated. Indeed the whole party appeared to consider the ship as their home, and the excursions made to the shore merely visits abroad. On each return, therefore, old Nanny the goat, the chickens, and a couple of kittens, were hailed with great delight by the young folks as domestic friends.

As we rounded the celebrated tower of Faro, and entered the straits of Messina, which, by the way, appeared greatly narrower than we had expected, we had plenty of time to muster all our classical associations, and to combine them with the still more interesting recollections of modern history, in the embellishment of the landscape before us. The pilot pointed out to us the little town of Scylla, perched upon the side of a rock on the opposite coast of Calabria, but we looked and listened in vain for the no less celebrated Charybdis of the ancients. Though from what I learned on the spot about the currents in these straits, and their peculiar eddies at certain periods of the moon's age, I could well understand how the inexperienced mariners of early times should have been embarrassed and alarmed in dark, rainy, blustering nights; and how the old poets should fasten with avidity on technical difficulties and dangers which even the professional men of these days are not ashamed to

confess have baffled their art. At the same time, it is both possible and probable that, in the lapse of so many centuries, the repeated earthquakes of that disturbed district may have altered the level of the bottom in the straits, either by heaving up the ground, as we know took place in the adjacent country of Calabria in 1783, or by depressing it, as occurred at Lisbon in 1755. In either case that conformation of the bottom of the straits which gave rise to those whirlpools of which we read such fearful accounts, may have been completely changed.

It is the province of poetry in most matters to exaggerate those characteristic features which it is the object of a painter to subdue. The poet loves to excite and to surprise, by bringing vividly before us combinations which are new and striking; while the painter, especially the portrait-painter, seeks to represent that which is familiar to our thoughts, and is calculated to harmonise with our ordinary feelings. It seems probable therefore that a misconception of the relative duties of these two kinds of artists, is the reason that so few descriptions of places prove on examination at all in accordance with our expectations. If there be too much imagination in the description, the original looks tame when we come to view it as it really stands; and if there be little or no fancy or poetic life in the picture,

but merely a catalogue of geographical parts arranged as on a map, without the retina of the mind's eye being impressed with any definite image addressed to the imagination, the most elaborate description goes for nothing, in giving a general idea of the spot.

We had pushed on to Messina at some inconvenience in order to get there before Sunday, never doubting that in a place containing upwards of 150 English residents, there would have been some Church-of-England service, as at Naples, Rome, Leghorn, and elsewhere on the continent. But in this we were disappointed; and our successful exertions to get out of the clutches of the Sanita gentry before Sunday, led to no good result. After our private reading, therefore, we drove about the town to take our chance of sights, having first carefully made a bargain with our hostess of the Leon d'Oro, our Italian by this time being sufficiently fluent for bargaining and scolding, the two grand purposes for which language is required in all places where that "soft bastard Latin" is spoken. The first thing of any note on which we alighted was a garden in the centre of the city, which, as we were informed, had once been an open piazza, or square, but which was now laid out with walks, and shaded by trees, many of them of a most respectable size, though none of

them had been planted more than two or three years,—such is the astonishing rapidity of growth in that delicious climate ! There is nothing wonderful in all this ; but what is comical enough, and characteristic of the particular part of the world is, that the good people of Messina were grievously displeased with their magistrates for having railed in and planted this open and seemingly useless piece of ground ; and thus converting a rough pavement into an agreeable promenade. It seems that in all times past the inhabitants, when alarmed by the smart shock of an earthquake, which so frequently occurs, were in the habit of repairing to this open square, to be out of the way of their falling houses. “ Now,” complain they, “ the earthquakes, in spite of the magistrates, are as frequent as ever, but we have no longer a safe and open place to run to ; and before the gates could be forced, or the railings climbed over, the town may be shaken about our ears, as shaken down it of course will be in due season ! ”

In the evening we drove, by a charmingly conducted smooth road, to the top of the high range of hills, which overlook Messina, from which we obtained such a view as few eminences in the world possess.

From north-east to south-east we overlooked Calabria, a country rugged enough in appearance to

justify the accounts we had read of its frequent earthquakes, by which the ground has been upheaved, sunk down, cracked, and twisted about in the most extraordinary manner. To this part of the view the celebrated straits of Messina form the middle distance. In the north lay the Lipari group of volcanic islands, with the restless, puffing, old Stromboli in the midst of them, which from all time, has never ceased to send forth flames and red-hot stones at intervals of a few minutes. In the opposite direction, looking past Mount Etna, which seemed close at hand, we could peer far into the Mediterranean. Immediately round about us lay a tract of mountain scenery worthy, from its dimensions and forms, to be called Alpine, but, instead of barren rocky summits and cold glaciers on their sides, it was clad with vines, figs, lemons, orange-trees, and olives, intermingled with a matting of wild flowers, and myrtles, apparently the common weeds of the country.

On our way back we stepped into the cathedral, and were surprised to find an altar grander and richer in many respects than most of the tawdry, showy affairs of Rome. But the processions, of which we fell in with several, had something of a ludicrous appearance after the well-arranged pomp and magnificence of the ceremonies at Rome. The mixture of the priests with military men had a very

curious effect. One procession included four regiments, "pioneers and all," each accompanied by full bands of music, marching in companies along with lines of friars, who were intermixed with the soldiers, at the rate of two rosaries to one firelock. The priests carried lighted tapers in their hands, and the soldiers presented arms to the image of St. Pasqualli, who was escorted by a goodly company of angels, all buried in a profusion of flowers, and tottering along on a car or scaffold, borne on the shoulders of twelve sailors, who looked strangely out of place in such a scene.

Monks wear pretty nearly the same appearance all over the world, from Goa to Genoa, from Venice to Valparaiso; whereas soldiers assume a thousand aspects, under which, it is said, an experienced eye can detect their good or bad discipline, and other military qualities. I do not know if this be true; but certainly, as far as handsome, well-made, uniforms, and an upright military carriage go, the Neapolitan soldiers equal any I have ever seen, in any part of the world; and I cannot divest myself of the idea that if properly led they might be made good fighting men. After all, dress and drilling go but a small way in the practice of real war; though when other requisites are there, such as national spirit, and mutual confidence in one another, and in their officers, they help, no

doubt, to cement loose bodies of men into efficient troops when they come into action.

We made a considerable change at Messina in the plan of our voyage. Our intention had been to go from thence to the adjacent port of Catania, which lies at the foot of Mount Etna, in order to attack that mountain without loss of time. But I found, to my great mortification, that my rheumatic leg was still unfit for such active operations; and therefore, in order to give time for things to mend, it was decided that on leaving Messina we should go straight to Malta, pay our visit there, then return to Sicily, proceed to Girgenti and Selinuntum on the south, coast back to Cape Passaro, and so round the south-east corner of the island to Syracuse, on the way to Catania, thus making Mount Etna the last part of the Sicilian expedition. I hoped, in this way, to have a fortnight or three weeks in which to regain strength for the ascent of the mountain, which I had often heard was rather a formidable undertaking in the way of fatigue.

Generally speaking, it is a bad plan to leave anything of this kind to be done at the end which might be executed at the beginning of the expedition. On the present occasion there was no help for it, and I made up my mind accordingly. For the rest, it is useful to recollect that in every journey very many objects which might yield us plea-

sure or profit, or both, must inevitably be passed without examination. I have even heard it said, and I think with truth, that one of the most useful secrets in travelling is less to discover what is worthy of being seen, than to determine what we can best afford to give up, in order to have time and strength for those first-rate objects which require our fullest attention.

We embarked in a great fuss and hurry on the morning of the day appointed for sailing, under the assurance, and with the expectation, of being off immediately. But the abominable people at the health-office could not be made to stir. Our captain, too, in like manner, dropped astern, and failed to get his papers before noon, at which hour the Sanita office was shut. The consequence was, that although we had been hustled on board, at great inconvenience to ourselves, at 11 o'clock, we had to wait till half-past 5 before we could budge; and all, literally, for nothing which might not have been done in five or ten minutes by any ordinary man of business in any other part of the world, always excepting Spain and the countries formerly under the dilatory sway of those most easy-going of mortals.

What added vastly to our provocation was, that the wind, which at first was quite fair for us to get out, gradually hauled round till it blew right into the

port. This rendered it necessary to work or “beat” out, as it is called; a simple process in a ship well manned and well handled, but one which, in so narrow a navigation, is attended with risk where all the parties concerned are not entirely up to their business. I certainly had imagined that no man in the kingdom of the Two Sicilies was more likely to execute such a manœuvre in good style than Don Giovanni, our captain; but this, however, was not the opinion of an English gentleman who happened to come on board with some letters for Malta, just as the anchor was “heaving a wash,” and the sailors were busy “hooking the cat.”

Our English friend having stepped aft on the quarter-deck, thrust his head into the binnacle, looked aloft at the wind, and having cast his eye round the curved, sickle-shaped bay, commenced a dialogue with the captain in Italian, which may be thus translated,—

“Hollo, master of mine, unless you are a deuced deal smarter in your movements, your sails more briskly set, and your craft a little better handled than I see any present prospect of, you will never get out of the bay this evening.”

“Leave the vessel to me, if you please,” said our captain quietly, and not very well pleased at the intrusion.

“Leave it to you, indeed,” exclaimed the

stranger ; “that would be a very pretty story ! Why we should have your craft ashore in a jiffy. No ! no ! give me the helm, my friend ;” and suiting the action to the word, without more ado he caught hold of the tiller, slipped it out of the astonished captain’s hands, and gently pushed him out of his way.

“What do you mean ?” said Don Giovanni, assuming the port of Mars.

“Mean ?” cried the other, “I mean to show you and your slovenly crew how to work a ship out of the port of Messina as she ought to be worked ! So, pray my good friend, do go forward and get the anchor to the cat-head as quickly as possible, and set two or three fellows to hoist away your fore-topsail. Come ! away with you, my worthy capitano ; don’t you see how we are drifting down on the shoals, with the sails flying about like so many pudding-bags !”

If the captain was amazed with this free-and-easy assumption of the command of his vessel, I was still more perplexed, and though highly amused with the novelty of the scene, I could not quite approve of my officer being superseded without any process of inquiry ; so I edged up to the Englishman, who by this time was in full cry, trimming the sails, luffing up, and bearing away, as the passage required, and ordering the men about in a

tone so authoritative that it secured immediate obedience. I said to him, though not without laughing at the absurdity of the whole affair, "Had you not better leave these matters to the worthy captain of the vessel; for I don't see by what possible right you can interfere with him or his ship?"

"Oh, sir," replied he, laughing, "you don't know these Neapolitans so well as I do. I have been knocking about here these twenty years and upwards; and having sailed a far bigger ship than this round and round these islands, I know the difficulties of getting out of this very awkward corner so well, that I am sure if I leave you to the care of your worthy captain, as you very properly call him, there is not the least chance of your getting clear of the land to-night."

"But how will the skipper like all this?" I asked. "No one approves of having the reins taken out of his hands perforce, as you have taken his tiller."

"Like it!" cried the intruder; "look at him there; don't you see he has already got the anchor a cock-bill, as I told him to do; only observe how he is lugging away at the jib-sheet with his own hands!"

"Ready about there! round she comes!" exclaimed the new commanding officer with a loud voice. And so he went on, first making one tack, and then another; sometimes keeping off the wind,

and sometimes shaking the sails; and all with a degree of precision in his pilotage, and a smartness in the seamanship, which drew a ghastly smile even from the compressed lips of the superseded chief. The sailors, indeed, laughed openly, and jumped about the decks with a degree of activity such as we had not witnessed before during the voyage. Once or twice the captain made a humble sort of attempt to suppress the mutiny, and regain possession of his own quarter-deck; but he was constantly remanded to his new duties, by an order thundered forth by the usurper, delivered in such a voice that even we, the independent passengers, were glad to keep "abaft the binnacle," out of the way of the men who were working the braces. What added to the absurdity of this strange scene was, the mirth of two or three other English and Sicilian gentlemen who had accompanied the new commander on board. They came merely to take leave of us; but knowing their companion to be a bit of a humourist, and a skilful seaman withal, they did what they could to encourage him in his very effective, but not a little ridiculous proceedings. The seamen, too, catching the spirit of the jest, joined them, and all of us, in a loud laugh, in which, at length, though much mortified, the poor captain himself was obliged to join.

"Oh now, my good fellow!" called out the

Englishman, "that's the proper way to take such an act of friendship as I have done for you, in time of need. Here, old boy, do you now take the tiller once more into your own worthy hands; keep the sails wrap full; give that point under your lee a wide berth; don't bear up too soon; and you'll be presently in the middle of the straits. When you get there you will have time to thank your stars that you had some one to work your brigantine out of the harbour of Messina; a job, let me assure you, which you never would have accomplished yourself. Good-night to you, sir!" and shaking him and us by the hand, he leaped into his boat, wished us all a good voyage, and left us to our fate.

During the night we had such light winds that when the day dawned we were still scarcely out of sight of Messina; but in very good time to see the sun rise on Mount Etna. The first light which caught his hoary top showed us that the snow, which we had previously supposed wrapped it entirely, did not extend to the highest peak, where we had supposed it most likely to be found. In strictness, therefore, the very top is not hoary, but black; an effect produced either by the steepness of the cone, which will not allow it to lie upon its sides, or by the volcanic warmth of the ground, which melts it as it falls. Even that enveloping the region of the mountain lying next

below the cone appeared to our eyes to be thinly sprinkled in comparison to what we had been accustomed to in the higher Alps. At all events, on the eastern, or Val del Bove side of Etna, we looked in vain for those solemn masses of eternal snow which, if I may so speak, appear indigenous to the Swiss mountains, and, as it were, flourish in the Alps in perennial luxuriance. On the contrary, the scanty snows of Etna present an exotic appearance, as if out of place and out of character either with the climate of the Mediterranean generally, or with this volcanic region in particular.

The gentleness of the slope of Etna, as I had been well prepared for it, did not surprise, nor displease me, as it does many people, who expect to find not only a lofty but a steep mountain. When people first see it, and find the slope so gentle, they can scarcely credit what they have heard of its being nearly eleven thousand feet high.

We soon left Mongibello astern, and gliding past Syracuse, found ourselves in the middle of the Mediterranean. But the children were rather disappointed to find that as we made Malta before losing sight of Sicily, they could not say they had been really and truly out of sight of land. If every proper nautical exertion had been made, we ought to have entered the celebrated

harbour of Valetta shortly after sunset ; but it was not until after midnight that we came close to the port, and not until past one in the morning that we anchored.

The moon being nearly at the full, we ran into the harbour with almost as much confidence as if it had been noon-day. Nothing could be more interesting either in a professional or in a picturesque point of view, than the entrance to the harbour of Valetta, which is so narrow that a ship almost rubs sides with the rocks, and yet the channel is so deep that the largest three-decker has ample water between her keel and the bottom. We carried but little wind in with us, and that being only aloft, the surface of the sea became quite smooth, but the swell of the Mediterranean extended far in, and glancing back the moonlight from the top of the long glassy ridges, which, as they passed upwards, set in motion all the shipping at anchor, so that their masts, from being stiff and upright, became inclined at all angles to one another, like a set of nine-pins made tipsy. As the harbour narrowed, the waves crisped and broke along the shore, by the slight additional impulse which we gave them ; and this brought a new feature to the landscape, for this slight splashing among the rocks was literally the only sound to be heard, all the rest of the world being asleep.

It might have been thought that the huge ranges of batteries upon batteries, raised by the ancient Knights of Malta, and strengthened by the science of modern war, had been entirely abandoned, for not a soul was to be seen, and only here and there a gun peeping from an embrasure. At last we detected one sentinel, pacing quietly among the works; and the glitter of even a single bayonet was quite enough to tell what lay behind.

We are apt to be impressed with somewhat similar feelings the first time we pass under the walls of the sister fortress Gibraltar. As we look at the pile of cannons extending from the water's edge to the sky-line of the rock, we ask ourselves how many of these guns will ever be brought into actual use? I remember propounding this question to an old bombardier who showed me through the endless galleries of that wonderful rock: he replied with a smile, "Not one!" adding, "they are not the less useful on that account, sir."

Something of the same kind may, perhaps, be said of our Mediterranean fleet, to get a sight of which had been one of our principal objects in going to Malta; and certainly never was any mortification greater than ours, on finding that the admiral, Sir Josias Rowley, had sailed but a few days before, taking all the ships with him to the Levant! One disappointment followed another;

for on landing, and hoping at all events to see the admiral-superintendent, a very old and particular friend of mine, he, too, we found, was flown,—gone off only an hour before, to the island of Gozo, which lies to the west of Malta. Finally, on going to the government-house, we heard, with great sorrow, that the governor and his family had just set out for the country, in consequence of a heavy domestic affliction. The mainstays of our hopes of enjoyment at Malta being thus cut away, we had well nigh re-embarked and sailed back again for Sicily.

CHAPTER XI.

TRIP TO THE ISLANDS OF MALTA AND GOZO.—ON
THE OUTPOSTS OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

No mortal who has not had actual experience of the fact can have any correct notion of the delight of making the transition from the dirty, piggish, lumbering, scrambling manner of getting on in Sicily, all at once to the cleanliness, plenty, and above all, the elegances of the English style of living. I never remember in the many times I have made similar jumps before, from one state of things to another, enjoying more completely the charms of refinement in manners than I did in landing on this occasion at Valetta, the capital, and the pride of Malta. It is not very easy, however, to describe in what the difference consists, for it is chiefly made up of things which, when taken separately, are very insignificant, but which all conspire to minister to our comfort when taken together.

We had not been long established in our com-

fortable quarters before our acquaintance began to swell, partly by the renewal of old relations, and partly by tying fresh knots. I walked up to an officer holding a high civil situation, for whom I had a letter, and found him a most agreeable person indeed, hospitable withal, and anxious to render us service. Meanwhile an old London friend of some standing called, and made us promise to dine with him on next Tuesday; then the commanding officer of one of H. M.'s regiments came to introduce himself, and to engage me not only to dine at the mess on Friday, but to request I might consider myself an honorary member as long as I staid at Malta. I felt, indeed, and said, that as a water-drinker I must prove a most unworthy member of a mess where, if the reports I heard were true, champagne and claret flew about as if they were squirted from a fire-engine.

In dread of these rapidly accumulating engagements, and being very anxious to visit an old friend and brother-officer, who was then living at the adjacent little island of Gozo, I resolved to set out for that place at once, before the proverbial hospitalities of Malta should render such a move impossible. Accordingly, we got up at three o'clock next morning, with the intention of starting in a boat we had appointed to meet us at four. But owing to some mistake on the part of the men, or

some misdirection on ours, or possibly merely the sleepyheadiness of the Maltese rowers, we were obliged to sit for half-an-hour on the bare rocks at the sally-port before we commenced our voyage. A half-hour, however, was never more agreeably passed, for we enjoyed a view of Mount Etna during the whole of this period, although the distance from the spot where we were seated to the top of that mountain is, according to Captain Smyth, about one hundred and thirty statute miles. During part of the twilight, the edges of the cone, and of a considerable portion of the sides, were projected on the clear sky behind with the most remarkable distinctness. After the sun rose, about five o'clock, by which time we had got out of the harbour, and were rowing along shore, Mount Etna gradually disappeared in the haze caused by the heat, which soon became excessive. Being in a light boat of the country, rowed along the northern shore of Malta by four stout hands, we reached the landing-place at Gozo, a distance of fourteen or fifteen miles, in three hours and a half. On our way we looked into "St. Paul's Bay," a small bight or cove, which tradition says, and all the Maltese world believe, is the place where that Apostle was shipwrecked. For my part I see so little reason to distrust the account, that ever since that time, when I have read the history given in

the Acts, I have been carried back in imagination to the spot, and fancied I could point out the exact rock on which St. Paul stood when he shook the viper from his hand.

I found the brother officer whom I had been in search of living with his wife and family at Rabatto, the capital of Gozo, which lies nearly in the centre of the island. They had breakfasted long before we arrived, but they soon knocked up a plentiful meal for us, in the true Indian style, which reminded me of the times long past when he and I had served in that country together. A row of fifteen, followed by a walk of two miles, and a drive in one of the rather savage calesses of those islands, furnished exercise enough to sharpen more languid appetites than ours. We then sat discussing old times till dinner was served, and again till there remained barely day-light enough to see our way back to the boat. We managed, however, to take a look at a singular work of unknown antiquity, and equally unknown purpose, composed of those huge blocks of stone which characterise the architecture of remote periods, when, as we suppose the mechanical arts were in their infancy, we wonder how such masses could have been moved, or why they have been moved.

These little islands, though certainly not destitute of cultivation, are quite destitute of general

verdure. In all the ravines, or what are called the valleys, we were told vegetation was to be seen at certain seasons of the year, and that nothing can exceed the richness of the gardens. I can only say, however, that in the month of May at least, of all the scraggy, calcined, dusty-looking places I have ever seen in any part of the world, Malta, Gozo, and the little island of Comino, which stands between them, bear off the palm for apparent sterility. The island of Ascension is no doubt a great deal more desolate than Malta, but it is so decidedly volcanic, and bears such evident traces of recent eruptions, that its story is told at the first glance. It pretends to being nothing more than a heap of scorix, streams of lava, and cones of ashes. Whereas Malta, with its fortifications, palaces, and gardens—its historical recollections, its knights, its sieges, and battles, lays claim to something more; and we are proportionately disappointed to see such a fire-brick-looking place as it is.

In the midst of such a scene it is not a little interesting to remark, how naturally the English, wherever they go, contrive to carry their comforts with them, and are so essentially well ordered as to be always ready to receive company without any warning. In the remote island of Gozo, for instance, when on our way back to the boat my friend called to introduce us to the officer in command of

the troops—eight-and-twenty, I believe, in number—we found, not the governor, as it happened, but the ladies of the family, as neatly dressed, and quite as ready to receive company as if, instead of living in a perfect desert, with many thousand chances to one against any visitors coming upon them, they had been residing in the most gadding street of the busiest watering-place, where visiting was the sole occupation.

At Valetta next day we dined with one of the most agreeable persons in the world, a gentleman well known in the world of letters and diplomacy, and who, though he might command the best society in London or Paris, and would be gladly received in either as one of its most accomplished members, chooses, from a love for the climate, to expatriate himself to this distant spot. But in truth, a person of this stamp can never be said to expatriate himself. The wide world is his true country; and though the range of any human benevolence must be limited, there is no reason why the circle of so good a man's influence should be smaller at one place than at another. When, therefore, we regret that the society of such a person is lost to us at home, we should recollect how much more severely his loss would now be felt on the spot which he appears to have selected for the rest of his life.

After all, Malta is not a bad place for any one to take up his quarters who wishes to know what is going on in the world; and especially since the introduction of steam navigation; for it is charmingly central, lying half way between western Europe and the Levant. The mails, too, from England, across France, as well as those coming by the Bay of Biscay and Gibraltar, call at Malta as a matter of course; and likewise on their return bring not only the freshest news from Turkey, Greece, Syria, and Egypt, but give the earliest accounts from India and China. The same causes bring a perpetual round of company to Malta; so that a resident there who, like the gentleman I spoke of, has the means of keeping what is called an open house, has a taste for good company, and knows how to profit by the occasions perpetually presenting themselves for making new and instructive acquaintances, could scarcely pitch his tent in a more advantageous spot.

We had intended to embark on the 30th of May on our return to Sicily, having been *fêté* to our hearts' content, and seen everything we thought was to be seen; but the wind blew freshly from the north, and as we were free agents, we requested our captain to furl his sails again, and to hold on till the breeze lulled. It was fortunate we made this resolution, as it gave us an opportunity of

seeing more of the interior of the island than we had ever dreamed of; for the good people there, as in other places, thought only of showing us the sights immediately at their doors, and were apt to consider the hospitalities of the table as paramount to any other attentions.

On casting about for some occupation to fill up the interval between our being perfectly ready to start and the moment of the sea-wind falling, it was suggested by an obliging friend that we might visit the ancient capital of Malta—Citta Vecchia, distant only six miles. The same kind person lent us a calesse, a queer, rumbling, very shaky, one-horse conveyance, in use, fortunately, nowhere else in the world. It somewhat resembles a gig, but still it is a very different thing. It may be described as a very small post-chaise, or, more nearly, a large sedan chair, on two shafts, between the foremost ends of which is placed the horse, while the other ends are inserted into the axle-tree of two carriage-wheels; thus the body of the calesse is not over the wheels, as in the case of a gig—and merciful it is that it is not—but lies between them and the horse. Relief from springs there is none, except what results from the elasticity of the shafts. The driver always runs by the side of his horse; and as the streets and roads are exceedingly rough, the bumping and shaking to

which passengers by this rudest of vehicles are exposed, have no parallel that I know of except in an American stage on a corduroy road. What is even more disagreeable than the jolting of the calesse in actual progress, is the wretched period when it is said to be standing still ; not only are any rough motions of the horse multiplied by the leverage of the shafts, but his smallest inclinations to the right or left jolt you from side to side : his impatience under the bite of a gnat almost pitches you out, and even his breathing is felt ; in short, the slightest tremor are all transmitted by the position of the body of the carriage to the unhappy passengers. Is it the oddest fact in the world that the inhabitants come to like this mode of conveyance, or to say they do, and perhaps to persuade themselves into it ; just as people who have resided long in Germany come to fancy they like the horrid close stoves and tobacco-pipes of that smoking, but otherwise charming, country. I do not think, however, that any extent of experience would bring me to like the Maltese calesse ; and I rather suspect that the cunning native drivers are secretly of this opinion, too ; at all events, no consideration will induce them to mount the shafts, however fatigued they may be.

A lady told us that on first coming to Malta she could not bear to see the driver running all day

long in the sun by the side of the horse ; and that after repeatedly suggesting to him to get up, she desired him to stop, and insisted upon his seating himself upon the shafts. The fellow declined, at first respectfully, but on her still further urging him, he fairly got angry, and, feeling himself insulted, declared he would not only leave her service, but leave her to shift for herself on the open highway, if she required him to do anything so very improper. I remember hearing of a spoiled child in England who insisted upon his friend Thomas the footman, being transferred from the hind dickey to the inside among the ladies ! Nor do I suppose Thomas's sense of propriety could have been more outraged by such an invitation than that of the calésse driver's at Malta, when desired to take a seat on the same level with his mistress.

Although the day was fiercely hot, and the glare from the white ground exceedingly annoying, we made out our journey to Citta Vecchia very pleasantly ; saw the cathedral, the catacombs, and, lastly, the identical cave in which St. Paul lived for three months after his shipwreck. A church, of course, has been built over the spot ; and the guides are quite in earnest in all they say about it ; but somehow we wanted faith in this particular ; though there is no doubt that Malta is the Melita of the Acts, not merely from the similarity of the

name, but from the details of that most interesting of voyages.

What interested us, I think, most of all was the astonishing and totally unexpected fertility of the country, in the absence, or almost total absence, of verdure. The rock, as I have already mentioned, is nearly white, and so is the soil produced by its decomposition. And as there are few trees, fewer shrubs, no hedges, and scarcely any grass, the only traces of green which the eye can discover lie in the gardens in which the vegetables and fruit are cultivated for the table. All the rest is a blank, to appearance, or rather to first appearance; for when the country comes to be more attentively examined, it is found to consist of innumerable well-tilled fields, inclosed by low, dry, stone walls, or what we call dykes in Scotland. Moreover, the whole of that part of the island which lies near Valetta, as well as that round Citta Vecchia, is studded with towns, villages, and single houses, indicating a dense population. Most of these towns are rendered striking to the eye by the Moorish form of the churches, and by the houses being flat-roofed, with tops generally ornamented by balustrades over well-shaded balconies and richly-carved window-frames.

Unless we had made this little supernumerary expedition, we should have come away without any

correct notion of the country ; nor should we have been disposed to believe, as we now do, that in March and April, when the corn is green, the fields become not only verdant, but very rich and pleasing to look at. At the time of our visit—the end of May—the greater part of the crop was cut down, and the remainder, partly from its ripeness and partly from the powdering it gets from the dust, having assumed the colour of the rock, was undistinguishable from it. Before we got back our eyes had become sore, not only from the action of the glare, but from the minute dust flying about—an evil which I have been told is apt to cause serious injury to the lungs of persons otherwise delicately constructed in that tender part of the human frame.

Upon the whole we left Malta, I think, with as much regret as we parted from any other spot during our journey. The people, one and all, with whom we had any intercourse treated us not merely with attention, but with kindness. But besides this, Malta has special recommendations to any one who prefers English manners and customs to those of any other country. I have before had occasion to remark, in describing the English Protestant chapels abroad, that it is the good fashion of our countryfolks, go where they may, to carry with them, as far as may be possible, those refine-

ments they have learned to appreciate at home. And as they generally have the taste and the skill, as well as the pecuniary means, to ingraft upon these home-spun comforts, the conveniences peculiar to the climate in which they may be resident, the combination becomes very delightful, and greatly alleviates the inevitable privations of their banishment.

Were I to change the habits of my past life, and become permanently fixed anywhere, I should prefer England, certainly, with its occasional disadvantages of climate, to India, Italy, Sicily, or anywhere else, whatever might be the local charms of each due to its latitude, or its domestic, or its political circumstances. But for a transient visit, such only as it has been my fortune to pay to most places, I must say that the attractions of Malta are greater than I have found almost anywhere else. For we find united in that spot many of the luxuries of a warm region, with most of the substantial comforts of English manners. The steam-packets, even at the time I speak of, (1834,) reached the island from England in fifteen or sixteen days, but now that the voyage has been reduced to ten or twelve, it can scarcely be considered a distant spot. There are generally four regiments at Malta, for which reinforcements of men and officers are constantly arriving ; and it is also the head-quarters

of the Mediterranean fleet. Now, in order to keep up these forces, regiments and ships are constantly arriving from home. Besides which numerous persons belonging to the civil establishment, with their families, land in like manner at Malta, after only a fortnight's voyage. The influence of all these constantly-recurring recent arrivals of persons all fresh from England, without their having run the gauntlet of the Continent, is very remarkable. The question is not, which is best or which is worst,—England or the Continent—but merely which of these two very different kinds of manners are to prevail. At Paris, Rome, Naples, and other capitals abroad, where the English are in the minority, we find, even among them, a strong dash of what we call foreign habits and ways of thinking; whereas at Malta, where the English not only predominate, but where the supply is hot-and-hot from home, we find that their genuine tone of manners and customs, of thoughts and sentiments, is kept up in a manner which belongs to none of our other settlements to the same extent: and in only a few of them in any degree approaching what is the current fashion of Malta.

At Halifax, in Nova Scotia, and for similar reasons, something of the same kind is observable. Still the proximity of that provincial capital to the United States, and the inevitable intermixture

of republican habits, both of thought and action, take off some of the polish above alluded to.

Gibraltar has considerable merits in its way, too. Perhaps it is rather too exclusively military, as it is certainly too small for comfort, being after all only a huge fortress. The intercourse it keeps up with their stately, but thoroughly well-bred neighbours, the Spaniards, contributes materially to tinge, and not unfavourably, the manners of the spot. I speak, of course, of the mere external manners, in the narrowest sense of the term, for in essential matters the benefit of the example, so far as it may be supposed to go, may be doubted.

Bermuda and the Cape of Good Hope have respectively considerable recommendations of their own, especially in their equable and essentially temperate climates. Bermuda, however, lies somewhat out of the way, and has, therefore, far too little intercourse with the mother country, to derive sufficient instruction in its manners, which are, therefore, quite peculiar. We speak of a language being a jargon, formed out of several others, such as the *Lingua Franca* of the Upper Mediterranean and the *Hindustanee* of India, and by analogy we may talk of the manners of a place being a sort of jargon compounded of the habits of various others. Thus, at Bermuda, there is perceptible a considerable dash of the languid, semi-luxurious style of the

adjacent West Indies, without their riches, and without the tropical ardour of the climate. This indolence is curiously modified by a touch of the American activity and recklessness in the pursuit of gain, which, however, is, in its turn, partly counteracted by the more scrupulous habits of the parent state. It is certainly much to be regretted that more pains are not taken to keep up the English rather than the transatlantic intercourse, seeing the vast importance of which Bermuda will become should we again, unhappily, be engaged in a war with the United States. The enormous advantages of possessing the cordial sympathy and co-operation of the natives, in the defence of any country, are well known to every one who has served in places where war is carried on. On this principle it becomes of the greatest consequence to give, as far as possible, an English character of thought, action, and sentiment to the inhabitants of those three great outposts, Malta, Bermuda, and the Cape, and to assimilate, not merely their manners to ours, but to render their interests identical with those of the mother country. It is strongly alleged that we neglect these points too much, and that we injure our political authority, and lessen our security in war, especially at Malta, by sharing the good things too little with the natives. They are a docile and amiable people, very willing

to be led into our ways and to assist us heartily in seasons of danger and difficulty. But they are sensibly alive to the neglect, amounting, I have frequently heard, almost to disrespect, in which we allow some of the richest and best born of the native inhabitants to remain, while more favoured English, without superior claims on the score of talents and character, are preferred before them.

In the present piping times of peace, plenty, and security, it may seem of little consequence what the native inhabitants of Malta, rich or poor, think of us. But in the event of a war of such importance and activity as to threaten an invasion of the island, the sincere goodwill of the population would become of vast consequence. Malta has a low and accessible coast all round, and is such that an enemy, unopposed by the people, might land at an infinitely greater number of points than could by possibility be guarded by troops. A hostile army, therefore, might effect a landing in spite of a very large garrison; and supposing the fleet to be employed elsewhere. The magnificent fortifications of Valetta would, no doubt, keep off besiegers for a long time, and if the access to it by sea was open, it might resist almost any force. If, indeed, we continued to possess the command of the sea, we might be able to cut off their supplies, and otherwise harass, and perhaps drive away an enemy

who had landed. Still, even in this course of operations, the real goodwill of the people on our side would prove of far more importance to us than any other description of alliance. It is, therefore, consistent with the soundest policy to establish, in good faith, that principle of conciliation which alone is likely to be effectual. I mean that which is based on a fair consideration of the feelings and interests of the native population.

The same reasonings apply perhaps with still more force to Bermuda, from the geographical and political circumstances of the case being somewhat different. In the first place, what we call Bermuda is not a couple of islands, like Malta and Gozo, but a group consisting, it is said, of as many separate islands as there are days in the year; and as each and all of these are accessible, they offer to an enterprising enemy innumerable points upon which he might easily form a lodgment, if aided by the goodwill of the natives. In the second place, the proximity of the United States, and the proverbial energy of the American sailors, together with the admirable nature of their nautical capabilities as to shipping, and other means of annoying the Bermudas, furnish most cogent arguments for our maintaining a hearty feeling of national good-will towards us on the part of the inhabitants of those islands. Let the least experienced person that ever thought of war,

much more those who have mixed in it, only consider with what different degrees of advantage the swarms of American privateers—not to speak of regularly-equipped armaments—would invade Bermuda, if the inhabitants were cordially with us, or were cordially with them ! Let us never forget how the unfortified town of Buenos Ayres repelled a regular army of British troops, solely by defending each house separately. The inhabitants were to a man against us, and having shut themselves up in their insignificant dwellings, rendered them so many impregnable fortresses. Equally impregnable would Bermuda be, if, should it be attacked, we shall fortunately have succeeded in making the inhabitants heartily our friends. If they be gradually rendered, by the agency of good services, thoroughly English in their feelings, and be brought by means of direct steam communication into as frequent intercourse with their parent state, as they now are with the alien states of America, we may defy the attacks of any enemy, in the event of a war, even if our garrison there should consist of only a few troops. But if we fail to give them this national character, there is probably no purely military force which this country could spare that could effectually hold possession of that most important position, on what has been well called the frontier of the Atlantic.

Similar reasonings, though different in degree, and varied by the peculiar circumstances of the case, apply to the Cape of Good Hope, and still more forcibly to the Isle of France. At the Cape there is still a strong leaven of the Dutch rule, which it may be greatly to our interest to conciliate, and I believe there is no great difficulty in accomplishing this purpose, so essential not only to the prosperity of the colony in peace, but to its security in war. At the Isle of France the difficulty appears to be much greater; and for reasons which, from being inherent in the nationality of the two parties there, it may be very difficult to remove; for in spite of all that the march of intellect has accomplished, it is to be doubted if its effects have been considerable in reconciling us to our nearest neighbours, or they to us. It has been said, indeed, that the two countries are now so fully alive to their mutual interests, that an interchange of goods and of good offices, if continued for a sufficient length of time, will gradually substitute national friendship for national enmity, and if so, that the influence of this improved understanding at head-quarters may be expected to extend to the Mauritius. I hope it may; but I cannot help thinking of Lower Canada, and much fear that nothing short of the swamping process will ever be effectual in either case.

Before quitting this subject it may not be without its use to consider the position which England holds for the good of all nations, fully as much as for her own, as the trustworthy possessor of a regular chain of political and military redoubts, nearly round the globe. First, there are Heligoland, near the entrance of the Baltic, the islands of Guernsey and Jersey, at the mouth of the Channel, and Gibraltar, at the entrance of the Mediterranean, which fortification, taken along with the similar fortress of Malta, and with the Ionian Islands, may be said to command the navigation of the Mediterranean. Then follow Newfoundland, Cape Breton, Halifax, Bermuda, and the West Indies, on this side of the equator; and on the other, Ascension, St. Helena, the Cape, the Isle of France, Ceylon, Singapore, New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land, and, more recently, New Zealand. It is probable that we shall also soon have a fixed military position at Chusan on the coast of China, to complete our communications, and not ours only, but those of every other nation whatsoever.

For, we may ask, in what other hands could these great national outposts be as safely entrusted? If Gibraltar, Malta, Bermuda, the Cape, the Mauritius, and Ceylon, belonged to any other country but England, is it not more than probable that the command which they give of the navigation of the seas in

which they respectively stand, might prove a tempting motive to mere war, whenever other circumstances should conspire to give that impulse? But who ever dreams of England taking any such unfair advantage, merely from her holding such power?

A series of highly interesting and valuable papers on this subject have lately been written by Lieut.-Colonel Wilkie in the *United Service Journal*, the ablest professional publication, in my opinion, that has yet appeared in this country. They are entitled "The British Colonies considered as Military Posts;" and although the view which this accomplished writer takes has more of a military tendency than a political bearing, which was my chief purpose in this discussion, I am happy to find all my ideas not only confirmed by his details, but greatly expounded and generalised. The Numbers of the *United Service Journal* in which these articles have appeared are 139, 140, 143, and 144.

CHAPTER XII.

GIRGENTI IN SICILY.

WE re-embarked in our pretty little brig at five o'clock in the evening, covered with dust like millers, and half choked with the impalpable powder of which I have already spoken as proving so noxious to delicate subjects. We, however, being anything but delicate subjects, sat down to a famous dinner prepared by the neat-handed Giuseppe, which, in anticipation of the swell outside, we demolished while the water was yet smooth and glassy. The captain, meanwhile, having gotten his anchor up before we came on board, with a degree of foresight wonderful for a Neapolitan, pulled his vessel off to a great buoy in the middle of the harbour. As soon as we had dined we gave the word to slip the hawser and make sail; the light wind fanned us out, and we bade adieu to Malta on the last day but one of the month of May, 1834.

The wind did not treat us well either in the

night or next day, and my party, young and old, lay prostrate on the deck, which the worthy skipper compared to a field of battle. For my part, though generally very sea-sick under such tossing circumstances, I felt so rejoiced to have regained the power of walking, and with that power the prospect of being able to undertake the ascent of Mount Etna, that I cared for little else. I think I have omitted to mention that on reaching Messina I was as perfect a cripple as any one of the melancholy objects who in most Italian and Portuguese towns are allowed by the police to spread about the streets in order to exhibit their misery to the best advantage, the purpose being to work on the feelings of the passers-by, and thus to relieve the public burthens by private charity. The exhibition—which I could not help—of my lameness had the good effect, however, of exciting the attention of a very able medical man, belonging to the East India Company's army, who, on his return from Calcutta overland, had been so much pleased with Sicily, as, fortunately for me, to pitch his tent there for the rest of his life. Having served in a part of the East particularly subject to rheumatism, he had studied the complaint in all its forms; and no less to my surprise than joy, he succeeded in half an hour, merely by an adroit process of bandaging, to renew most of my strength; and in a few days my

health entirely. I cannot describe the different feelings with which I viewed the top of Mount Etna before and after this process! Before the cure I had looked at the summit—on the Fox and Grape principle—with far more bitterness than satisfaction, from fearing that I should never be able to reach it; but after regaining the faculty of locomotion, I felt as if it were an affair of a few hours to scramble up. The task, indeed, did not prove so easy, but still I made it out.

The wind hung to the westward so provokingly, that on our stretching over from Malta to the south coast of Sicily, we could not fetch Girgenti,—the Agrigentum of the ancients,—the port we were bound for. During the whole of Sunday also, on as magnificent a first of June as ever was seen, we kept beating along shore, with the breeze dead on end, and a head sea, which greatly disturbed the internal economy of the passengers. We were much tantalised, too, with the sight of the highlands over our port; and later in the day with a distinct, though distant, view of the temples which have obtained for that place a celebrity of between two and three thousand years' date. Towards evening, as usual in those seas, the wind fell light, and it was not until late at night, and in the dark, that we anchored inside the mole of Girgenti. The town itself, which is about

four miles distant, we saw during all the afternoon, encrusting the top of a hill, much after the fashion of those on the Col de Tende, and all very striking and picturesque. The country, after Malta, looked like a garden; but here may be observed an important distinction. Malta, though it appears like a desert, is made, by the industry of its inhabitants, in the highest degree fertile; while Sicily, though essentially a paradise, is made virtually barren by the indolence of the natives.

The next day turned out a busy and chequered one with us. As we had entered the port in the dark, it became a matter of much curiosity to look round us when the day broke, and to examine into our novel position. We found ourselves snugly moored, head and stern, the latter, that is, our latter end, or poop, being tied to the wharf, near the end of the mole, while the former, that is, our foremost end, or bow, was kept out by a cable bent to an anchor, which had been dropped in the middle of the small, artificial port embraced by the mole. The adjacent country consisted of bare, white cliffs, changing to a yellowish brown towards their western extremity, and capped by still more yellow strata, which again were crowned with trees, and many corn-fields, some almost ripe and ready for the sickle, others actually under its touch, and some scarcely turned from the green of

spring to the mellow tint of this early harvest. On the top of the ridge overhanging the port, or marina, stands the lighthouse which had guided us in, and there it—or something of the kind more or less rude—has probably stood since the times of the Punic wars—*vide* Polybius. Near the end of the dirty, straggling, fishing village, dignified with the name of the seaport of Girgenti, our captain pointed out to us an immense quantity of sulphur, not the rude sulphur of the geologists, but the brimstone of commerce, prepared for embarkation, in cakes about a couple of feet long by eighteen inches wide, and five or six inches thick, piled on one another with such regularity as to be easily counted. I dare say I saw enough to load half-a-dozen ships withal ; but little thought of the political commotion of which, in all probability, these very cargoes were afterwards the cause. I thought only of their volcanic origin, and cast my eyes to the right and left for the traces, which were numerous enough, of their geological history.

While I was speculating on these formations, groups of the natives—fine, tall, muscular fellows, with short trousers rolled up to their thighs, were employed as busily as Sicilians ever appear to be employed about anything, in carrying loads of this precious material on their shoulders, exactly as our Edinburgh porters carry coals, and deposit-

ing it in great launches, or boats, which could not approach the shore nearer than 150 yards, by reason of the shallowness of the water. This leads me to mention an interesting geological fact, namely, that owing to the loose nature of the materials forming the cliffs in the neighbourhood of the port of Girgenti, the harbour is constantly filling up, and it costs the people a great deal of trouble to keep it clear, by excavating the sand and silt washed down by the rains. I could perceive a broad belt of white water, fringing the sea, to the extent of a mile from the shore, under which a shoal must be gradually depositing itself along the coast, which will one day be dry land.

Fain would we have leaped on the wharf, and taken advantage of the fresh air of the early morning for our excursion to the temples, but this could not be, for until that purgatory of the Mediterranean, the Sanita, had been passed through, we were as much prisoners as if we had been convicts on our way to Australia! So we waited with great impatience hour after hour, and after all were very near being subjected to a still longer period of durance, for at seven o'clock we were suddenly told that the health-office people were ready to examine us, and that unless we hurried our dressing operations, and took these arbitrary folks at their exact hour, they

might turn about and leave us till their midday visitation. About half an hour before this critical moment a friend of our captain's came down abreast of the ship, and offered his services to assist us in any way. So we hailed him, and begged him to send up the hill to Girgenti for three letigas, and to be very particular to give directions for a good breakfast to be prepared for us. How little, alas ! after our experience of Italy and Sicily, did we appear to know of the habits of these people when we trusted to such arrangements being made by proxy, on a matter of such vital importance to the success of an expedition. It did occur to me, indeed, that it would be more prudent, on Dugald Dalgetty's principle, to secure a comfortable meal before starting for the interior of Sicily ; but the richness of the scenery was so inviting, and the air so deliciously cool, we could think of nothing but the pleasure of rambling among the mountains. As soon, therefore, as those most absurd and tiresome of public functionaries, had given us *pratique*, we walked along the mole to the village, and there sat down in the shade of a verandah, or portico, in front of the little café, or wine-shop, kept by the gentleman who had undertaken to send up to Girgenti for the letigas, or litters.

In a few minutes we were surrounded by every

idle man, woman, and child in the little hamlet,—the great majority, I suspect, of its whole population,—who gaped at us in silence, as if such a sight had never been seen before. In truth, I don't suppose such sights are frequent in Sicily; for though that country does not lie far, counted in actual miles, from the beaten track of European tourists, it certainly costs a good deal more trouble to get to any part of it, especially at such an out-of-the-way place as Girgenti, than it would take to reach places five times as far off, provided no sea intervened. What a barrier, after all, is a little strip of salt water, though crossed in a few hours! Witness the channel between France and England, and consider what modifications—political, historical, and moral, even so small an intervention gives rise to! Even fresh water, as I heard a military engineer once remark, when this subject was discussed, if properly disposed in the fosse or ditch of a fortification, though but a few yards in width, may check the attack of ten thousand resolute men. But it is salt water and sea-sickness, and the discomforts of navigation, which indispose the world to hold intercourse with islands, and happy for us it is so; though certainly this circumstance proves the misfortune of Sicily.

I do not think, indeed, that such exhibitions as our party presented could have been frequent at the

port of Girgenti. It consisted of eight souls in all, including the little boy and his Italian nursery-maid, whose ecstasy on again getting on terra firma exceeded that of any of the group. The little fellow's rosy cheeks, and the other children's dresses, and indeed our whole aspect were so different from those of the natives, that the wonderment we caused was not unnatural, and for a time rather amusing to ourselves—it could scarcely have been greater had we landed among savages. But by-and-by when we began to get hungry, and the sun to get hot, and no letigas made their appearance, our interest in the fine scenery and the strange people rapidly diminished. Meanwhile the Sicilian children, emboldened by our familiarity with their seniors, crowded round ours, and by their proximity effectually demolished the picturesque sort of interest which belonged to their appearance when a little way off. In a warm climate rags and beggary are not necessary accompaniments, for the drapery may be so scanty, that the “human form divine,” especially in the young, has generally full play, and the cupids of Albano, or the angels of Rubens, are scarcely more graceful than the idle boys of any Sicilian village. Unfortunately soap and water are little in request, at least they are little used, in those parts; and other nameless refinements in the toilet of the rising generation of Sicily are

quite neglected. I need say no more ; but nothing could exceed the horror of our worthy Scotch upper nurse at what she beheld, except it was her indignation when any of these young barbarians came in contact with her own little charges.

An hour-and-a-half of this steaming process was enough to evaporate all our patience. The mountains looked flat ; the warm scenery cold ; the gay Sicilians dull ; and there seemed nothing left for us but to go back again. Just, however, as we had adopted this wise resolution, an over-heated scout made his appearance on the adjacent height, bawling over the edge of the sulphur cliff, and signifying by his gesticulations that the vehicles were coming down the pass. Accordingly, the tiresome letigas at last entered the village, and in these our party were presently stowed away. In the first were placed the English and the Italian maids and the youngest child ; in the next our German governess and the two girls, whilst we brought up the rear—and a strange looking procession we made !

A letiga is neither more nor less than a double sedan-chair, supported by two mules instead of by two men, between the poles ; I call it double because it holds two people, who sit face to face, but it is no wider than a sedan-chair, in fact, is scarcely so wide, and can hardly be called large enough for

two grown-up persons to sit in comfortably. Yet the motion, even on the roughest and steepest roads, we did not find very disagreeable, though the position was rather cramped, and the drivers insisted upon our sitting not only quite still, but in such a manner that we might exactly balance each other. If we wished to look on one side, and in doing so stretched our heads out of the window, the muleteers set up such a melancholy cry of remonstrance as made us draw them back again, like a tortoise who gets a rap on the nose. It seems that wherever a mule can travel, a *letiga* may be carried; and this is certainly no small matter in a country like Sicily, where in most places the roads are mere foot-paths; and where, even were the island in the hands of energetic and wealthy people, it would be very difficult to make efficient highways, except by the expensive processes adopted among the Alps, of which, it is true, there does occur a good example in the government road over the hills near Palermo. The good folks of Malta entirely failed to convince us that their barbarous calesses were the vehicles best adapted to the streets of Valetta; but a small experience at Girgenti satisfied us that the *letiga* was the only conveyance for Sicily, not only on such short excursions as we made, but for going round the island. Our worthy old friend, the late celebrated

Mrs. Starke, accompanied by an English lady of title and fashion, actually made the tour of the whole island in letigas; and I heard them declare afterwards, that upon the whole it was not an unpleasant mode of conveyance. I do not know what indian-rubber property these ladies may have possessed in their bones and muscles, to resist the jolts and bumps of a Sicilian road, but I suspect the moral elasticity of their spirits did more for them than the physical spring of their bodies, for the letiga boasts no such luxury. At all events I know that, after somewhat more than an hour's travelling up to the town, from the port, I got out with as much satisfaction as ever I disembarked from any vehicle in my life; except on the occasion when I made my escape from the "rotonde" of a French diligence, in which I had been rumbled about all night, from Paris to Rouen. I had business on hand—was in a great hurry—but flesh and blood could stand no more, so I stopped at Rouen, missed the steam-boat from Dieppe to Portsmouth; and thus lost four precious days, all because I could not stand four hours more of such hideous jolting.

Girgenti is beautifully situated on the top of a hill, but like almost all other cities, its beauty is lost the moment it is entered. The contrast, indeed, between the man-of-war-like cleanliness of Malta—in the streets of which one is afraid to tear

up a letter lest the police should find fault with the scraps as a nuisance—and the ultra Neapolitan dirtiness of Girgenti, was striking to more senses than one. But we consoled ourselves with the prospect of the nice breakfast we had commanded. Alas, alas! we may call spirits from the vasty deep, and order breakfasts in Sicily; but will they come when we do call? Our appetites had been sharpened as on a hone, partly by the unwonted exercise of the *letiga*, and partly by the moral influence of Mrs. Starke's glowing description of the inn. I suspect the people must have known beforehand that this distinguished road-book writer was coming upon them; and foreseeing the mighty influence of her pen, may have prepared for her what they certainly did not prepare for us. Not only was nothing got ready, in spite of the flattering assurances of our friend at the port, but what was worse, there seemed to be nothing wherewithal to provide a meal. And really it does appear strange that in an island fertile, as it would seem, with every gift of nature, and situated so as to prove the very focus of commerce, it should be destitute even of the commonest luxuries—almost of the necessities of life. In the first place, we could get no tea nor coffee; secondly, no milk; thirdly, no bread, except such as being made of Indian corn, and stale and as hard and black as

the timbers of the *Royal George*, defied the inroads of our teeth.

As it was utterly impossible to enjoy the temples, or anything else, in this state of affairs, we must positively have retreated to our ships in search of provisions, had I not, in the culpable absence of every other precaution, bought four goodly fish out of a boat which had sailed into the port as we were landing. These, which I had made the letiga driver tie to the saddle-bow of his leading mule, proved our mainstay, and added to a mutton-chop, which our distracted steward Giuseppe managed to discover in the town, restored the equilibrium of our good-humour.

Mrs. Starke, whom we had fallen in with at Palermo on first touching at Sicily, had given us a copy of her book for a resident at Girgenti, assuring us that this attention, and the use of her name, would prove a sufficient introduction to one of the most intelligent and well-informed men there, so we sent off our parcel, and at the same time despatched a letter of introduction we had brought for another gentleman, a well-known man of letters, and withal an artist and antiquary, but who, being confined to his house by a migraine, could not come to us, but sent to say if we would do him the honour to visit his collection of antiquities, he would afterwards furnish us with a guide

to the temples, and aid us by sailing directions. Shortly afterwards a native gentleman made his appearance ; and I feel persuaded that a more learned or more highly-informed personage is not to be found within sight of Mount Etna, or any one more minutely acquainted with the details of the ruins ; but, oh me ! such an endless tongue ! At the slightest hint of curiosity on our part, he set off in a lecture on the name, origin, uses and abuses, size, age, and present state and condition of each of the temples, in one unbroken chain of eloquence, that our ears became fatigued, and our attention exhausted in the course of no very long time. The truth was, we cared little or nothing about the names of the temples, or their history at any period of their existence ; all we wanted was to be allowed to see them in peace and quietness, and we dreaded above all things the companionship of such a loquacious cicerone, who was evidently resolved not to spare us a single ruin, or even a single column, but was bent upon dragging us, in spite of our repeatedly expressed disinclination, over every square inch of the antiquities, each and all of which appeared in his eyes to possess equal value. Our agony, therefore, was extreme when he exclaimed, with a flourish,

“ I’ll be your guide ! But,” added he, his native Italian politeness rising superior to his enthusiasm

about the antiques, "I shall now leave you to finish your breakfast."

I thought this a good opportunity of trying to get rid altogether of such a "companion to the ruins" as would inevitably have demolished our pleasure in seeing them, by the intense puppyism of his antiquarian details, about which, even if we had had any faith in their correctness, instead of distrusting the whole, we should not have cared one single straw. So I took up the other Signor's note, and said that we had already been offered a guide. This produced a pause and a look of displeasure, of which I took no further notice than handing to our friend his rival antiquary's epistle. He read it with evident contempt, and having remarked that the guide we should be provided with would be a mere ignorant clown, he left the room with a flounce which gave us hopes that we should see no more of him. But we never felt secure until we found ourselves fairly out of the town, with no other guide than the unpretending person first offered to us, under whose silent convoy we enjoyed our ramble among the ruins without the smallest drawback.

Neither of the two temples which are still standing equals either in beauty or in magnificence the temple of Neptune at Pæstum, though they are certainly larger, and built in vastly more picturesque situations, their sites being evidently chosen ex-

pressly to show them off, near the edges of bold cliffs, on elevated grounds, so as to be visible from all the surrounding country. As far as I could judge by the eye, the columns of the Girgenti temples have no swell or *entasis*, as it is called, for the lines forming the sides of the flutings appeared to be quite straight. I had no means of measuring the height of these columns; nor should I have taken the trouble to verify measurements which must be well known, and are of course to be found in every book of ancient architecture; but I had the curiosity to measure the distance between the columns respectively; and as I am not aware that this has been done before, I shall mention some discordances which seem to me curious.

The Greeks, as every one knows, in their porticoes of the Doric order always placed the column at the corner rather closer to its adjacent neighbours at the front and sides of the temple than the rest of the columns are placed. I believe that architects explain the reason of this departure from uniformity by saying that the end column of a portico, standing as it does at the corner, and having nothing on one side of it but the open sky, requires support, as it were; and if its distance from the next column were really the same as that between the columns further from the angle, it would look as if it were greater. There is, how-

ever, a more substantial architectural reason for placing the corner column nearer those which stand next it, namely, the symmetrical necessity, so to speak, of bringing the last triglyph to the extreme end, or corner, of the frieze, instead of placing a bare metope at the end of that member of the entablature. This vicious practice we sometimes see adopted in the degenerated works of the lower empire, but never in the older temples of the Greeks. In order, however, to accomplish this purpose, which is quite essential to the beauty of the whole, a departure from strict rule and compass uniformity must be adopted. Either the end column of the portico must project beyond the outer edge of the architrave, in order to bring the axis of the column to plumb the middle line of the last triglyph, which would have the most awkward look possible, or the end column must be brought so much nearer to its neighbour as to place its outer side perpendicularly under the extremity of the architrave; thus disregarding the plumb line which falls from the centre of the triglyph at the corner, which, in that case, will no longer pass through the axis of the column.

In short, be the reasons what they may, the fact is, that we find in all the best old Greek temples, the distance between the corner column of the portico and that next to it, considerably less than

the distance between any other two columns. Let us now see what occurs at Girgenti, where the measurements which I made give a different result in some respects from what I had been led to expect. Nothing in the following observations is inconsistent with the above theory, and perhaps they may be worthy of the attention of persons who may be better qualified than I am to judge of their value.

The distance between the corner columns and those which stand adjacent to them on the north side of the Temple of Concord, I found to be 2 feet 4 inches; the distance between the second and third columns 2 feet $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches, but, to my surprise, the distance between all the other pairs of columns standing further from the corners, was found to be 2 feet $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches. On turning the corner and measuring the distance between the angle column and that adjacent to it in the portico, I found it to be as before 2 feet 4 inches, and the distance between the second and third column of the portico 2 feet $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches; but that between the two centre columns of the portico was 2 feet $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches, or exactly the same as between all the columns of the sides further from the angle than the second column. I should mention that there are six columns at each end of this temple,

and thirteen at the sides, and the above measurements are very nearly the same at both ends.

The columns on the north side of the Temple of Concord are all so nearly perfect that I can depend pretty well on these measurements, which were made from the hollow of the fluting. Those on the south, being exposed to the rainy winds, are much more worn ; but those at the west end are in so good a state that the above measurements may I think be relied on nearly. At the east end there occurs a discordance of an inch in the distance between the second and third columns (2 feet $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches being the measurement instead of 2 feet $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches). But I suspect this is caused either by the accidental weathering of one or both the columns, or by the working of repairers and restorers—those cruel destroyers of the antique.

From the two comparatively complete temples called Concord and Juno Lucina, we proceeded to the remains of an enormous structure said to be a temple dedicated to Jupiter Olympus, which I suspect has never been finished—perhaps never commenced. The lofty platform on which the columns stood, or were meant to stand, gives some idea of the magnificence of the architect's conception, and the vast piles, and long lines or ridges of carved stones lying outside the four

faces of the platform give abundant proofs of the vigorous manner in which it was intended to carry that conception into effect. I am not aware of what antiquarians who have studied such scenes say to this ruin, but I cannot in the least comprehend how any temple, if it ever were completed, could possibly be thrown down, either by an earthquake, or by the slower, though still more destructive hand of man, with such perfect regularity that the fragments of each of the four faces of the building should be deposited in a manner exactly similar, all round, and all on the outside, without one fragment having fallen within. I do not mean to assert that there are literally no fragments of the columns, or of the entablature which they either did support, or were intended to support, to be found within the bounding lines formed by the great steps leading up to the platform. But it struck me that all such fragments belonged to the cella, or inner part of the edifice.

It also occurred to me on the spot that most, if not all, these stones are merely the dressed materials, brought to the spot, probably by contract, and ready to be put up when it should suit the convenience of the architect, or the finances of the government who gave the order. The more urgent expenses of war might swallow the money intended for the erection of this huge temple ; or a

new government might not have taste or inclination to follow up the magnificent designs of its predecessors in office. In opposition to this notion it may be said that the stones, though most of them are carefully hewn, lie in rather too disorderly a state to bear out the idea of their having been placed there in readiness to be put up. But, surely, in the lapse of upwards of twenty centuries, during which these noble temples have probably been used as quarries, just as the poor Coliseum at Rome was, we can imagine the arrangement of the building stones to have been often disturbed.

I could discover no blocks intended for complete columns, only pilasters; but as these measured 13 feet 4 inches in diameter they are splendid-looking works, and I could stand in one of the flutings quite easily. This temple is said to be 368 English feet in length, by 188 in breadth. In the centre of the platform lies a very respectable giant, formed of several pieces of stone, the whole being 27 feet long; and many other fragments of equally gigantic statues lie scattered about. It is supposed that these figures acted the part of Caryatides, or supporters, to some part of the interior of the edifice.

The examination of the two complete temples and of this huge prostrate one, so entirely spoiled us for everything else, that the guide and the guide-books failed to inspire us with any interest for sun-

dry other piles of ruins, all bearing the names of some god or goddess, and probably very interesting to those who have time to study them, and who have, besides, classic lore enough to investigate their history. We had plenty of time, but no classical lore; and therefore we could not, and in fact did not try, to work ourselves up to the proper pitch of faith in our guide's erudition to listen either with or without impatience to his lecturings. Satisfied with what we had seen, we interdicted him, upon pain of forfeiture of an extra gratuity, from speaking a single word, except when asked a question. We then took our leave of these stupendous ruins, and returned by another road to our ship, without examining several ancient remains to which the disappointed cicerone would fain have called our attention.

CHAPTER XIII.

SAMPLE OF NEAPOLITAN SEAMANSHIP—SYRACUSE—GREEK TEMPLE—DIONYSIUS'S EAR—GARDEN OF A CONVENT IN AN ANCIENT QUARRY.

NEXT morning we were rejoiced to observe that the wind blew fair for us to proceed on our voyage to Syracuse, and we commenced the simple operation of getting out of the mole of Girgenti at nine o'clock; but it was not till half-past one that we succeeded in getting to sea—just four hours and a half in accomplishing what, with the most ordinary management, might have been effected in twenty minutes.

I have already mentioned that our brigantine's head was tied to the wharf, and her stern held out by an anchor in the fair way, so that if sail had been made on her, the shore hawser let go, the vessel been pulled off to the anchor, and pains taken to cast her the right way, we might have stretched right out to sea on the starboard tack, the wind being to the south-westward. But our

worthy skipper, although one might have supposed his long experience would have taught him better, did not prepare his sails till he had tripped his anchor, and then he managed to cast his head the wrong way—an error which brought his jib-boom end over the mole head, and very nearly swept away the roof of the Sanita office, an event which we were spiteful enough to pray for. In order to save this and worse evils, our poor captain, unfer-tile in resource, felt, like many other blundering officers, that something must be done, but knowing not what, did just the very thing he ought not to have done, and let his anchor run down again to the bottom at the wrong place. By the time the cable was tight, the vessel had swung alongside the quay, and there we lay exactly in the position we had occupied three-quarters of an hour before, only turned end for end. It was as plain as A, B, C, what ought now to have been done, for in truth the ship was in a better situation for going to sea than she had been at first, inasmuch as her head was turned outwards instead of her stern. But the captain having made sundry obvious false moves in his game, had lost the confidence of his crew, and with their confidence, as is usual in such cases, both their respect and their obedience. The poor man showed, too, that he was at a loss what to do next, so the mate tried his hand, but the crew not liking

this, failed to execute his orders, and in a little while, every man and boy along the decks busied himself, not in working, but in giving his opinion, and suggesting his own manœuvre for extricating us from our scrape. This horrid confusion was greatly augmented by the vociferous exclamations of the harbour-master and his people, who moved up and down the wharf abreast of us, alternately scolding us for our bad management, and recommending fresh operations — sometimes assisting, sometimes impeding us.

For about half-an-hour I was diverted beyond measure at this strange specimen of Neapolitan seamanship; but when a full hour had elapsed after we had got back to our old position, I began to fear we should either not get out before the sea breeze set in, or that we should be drifted on the shore and be wrecked altogether. So I ventured to put in my oar, and told the captain, as well as I could command Italian words, what I thought he ought to do,—recommending him to run a kedge out to sea, to haul his vessel off to it, and then proceed to make sail. This he at last succeeded in doing; but then he had his first anchor to pick up, without which he could not start. This occupied his long-boat another hour, and after all it was touch-and-go with us whether, after four hours' work, we should not have found ourselves either

plump on the beach, or entangled again among the shipping in the port !

When, however, we did get to sea, and made sail, we spanked along finally till about four o'clock, when the wind chopped round dead against us, blowing from the south-east instead of the south-west, the wind which had prevailed all the morning. Had we at that critical stage of our passage been fifteen or twenty miles further on, as we might and ought to have been, if we had left Girgenti at nine o'clock, we should have been able to have made a fair wind of it, and steered into Syracuse with a flowing sheet. As it was, our bungling operations placed us to the westward, that is to leeward, of Cape Passaro, instead of to windward ; and instead of our anchoring at eight o'clock in the evening, we had the mortification of being left all night to kick about, with only the moderate probability of being able to get far enough next morning to avail ourselves of the sea breeze. Meanwhile the fresh head wind and the head sea had knocked down all the party but myself ; and the same company who had sat down so merrily to breakfast, were all now prostrate on the deck, sea-sick and helpless. Judging, however, from the experience I began to gather of that pacific region in that charming season—the beginning of June—I anticipated that before the sunset the wind

would fall, and having held a consultation with our steward Giuseppe, the dinner was put off from three till six, by which hour the breeze had lulled almost to a calm, and the sea so entirely subsided that the water lay as smooth as a mill-pond. The captain, to oblige us, steered close along the beautiful shore, where we soon forgot all our disasters, and while enjoying the effect of the sunset on the mountains lying between Mount Etna and Cape Passaro, we rather rejoiced than otherwise at the delays which had provided us such a treat.

Next day we rounded the above-mentioned Cape, and having caught the sea-breeze rattled before it in such fine style, as to enter the magnificent harbour of Syracuse at three o'clock. Owing, however, to the sleepy-headed manner of doing business in the "sweet south," especially in Sicily, we were kept waiting three very mortal hours in the most wanton way possible. One of these we were forced to pass on the beach, within the bars of a sort of cage, like wild beasts, guarded by soldiers with loaded muskets! It was in vain we argued that we had come straight from a neighbouring harbour, in the same island, under the same government, and during a period of perfect healthiness, from which very place persons travelling by land were allowed to enter the town freely. All would not do! Our names had to be called

over, our ages demanded, our objects in making the journey inquired into, and twenty other similar impertinences gone through, under a set of the most solemn coxcombs I ever had the misfortune to deal with, before we were allowed to pass their barrier. While undergoing this irksome detention, and grieving to see time thus trifled with, we amused ourselves with observing a set of ants at work, which looked as if they were sent there as a satire upon the slow-working habits of the people, and to show how superior the brute, or rather the insect part of the creation, were in diligence over the human part. But no sooner had we escaped from our cage than we fell into the hands of a set of harpies fully as busy as our friends the ants, in the persons of the master and waiters of the *Albergo del Sole*, with whom we had to make a specific bargain before entering their house—a painful and humiliating but indispensable ceremony.

We also found ourselves in the midst of a grand and very busy “Festa,” and having fallen in with a procession, saw an illuminated church, and witnessed a very tolerable display of fireworks, let off in honour of the conclusion of the eight days’ fête of Corpus Christi. The fireworks we saw to great advantage from the English consul’s window overlooking the Plaza, but before they commenced I

had time to make a run to see an ancient Doric temple, with columns very complete, reminding me more of Pæstum than those of Girgenti had done.

This temple of Minerva, as it is called, owes its preservation to its having been converted into a Christian church so early as the seventh century. Eleven columns are still standing on one side, and eight on the other—all very perfect, both in their flutings and in their capitals. The architrave on the north end, and most of the frieze, are also well preserved. The columns are partially built into the walls of the church, but being much wider in diameter than the walls are thick, they show both without and within. The action of the elements has not materially injured the external faces of these pillars, but the barbarous, ignorant, tasteless blockheads who have had charge of the inner sides, have so bedaubed them with alternate coats of paint and whitewash, that all the sharpness of the edges of the fluting, and consequently much of their beauty, is lost in the rugged and irregular surface. As an earthquake in the twelfth century shook down the roof, I suppose it was upon the same occasion that the tops of five or six of the columns on the north side, together with the massy entablature which they support, have been forced so far outwards that there appears a considerable bulge at this place. The columns are

twenty-five feet in height, and as nearly as I could measure six feet in diameter at the base. I think they have a slight swell or *entasis*, which gives them an extremely graceful appearance, and renders the building, upon the whole, fully as worthy of admiration as anything at Girgenti.

It is a pity that the government do not take steps to disinter this magnificent ruin from the mass of rubbish which obscures so great a part of its beauty. We cannot but feel grateful for the accidental circumstance which has led to the conservation of this temple; yet now, where every such structure is at least as safe as the church which hides it, this venerable relic—the only one of its kind — of the ancient magnificence of Syracuse, might be allowed to come forth and show itself. If this were done it would prove a great source of attraction to the place, especially as it is far more accessible than either Girgenti or Selinuntium, and lies directly in the fair way between Naples and Malta.

On the following day we busied ourselves very agreeably in seeing the principal remains of the ancient splendour of this celebrated city. Of these we were most interested by a theatre, said to be of the oldest times of the Greeks, some three thousand years ago, and an amphitheatre framed probably by their Roman conquerors, a thousand years

later. The amphitheatre, though large and in some respects remarkable, looks small in comparison to those of Rome and Capua. The theatre, on the other hand, is a first-rate work of art, in its way; and, I believe, the largest in the world. It was called, if I mistake not, by Cicero, the Circus Maximus, and is 116 feet in diameter, being a little more than a semicircle. Both it and the amphitheatre are excavated out of the solid rock. Fragments of aqueducts, run dry for ages, tombs, and cenotaphs raised to perpetuate the memory of men long since forgotten, besides piles of ruins of nameless edifices, and numberless excavations in the rocks, for unknown purposes, over miles of area, give ample evidence of the extent of the city, now shrunk into a petty town at a remote angle of the former capital.

Perhaps, however, the most striking proofs of the magnitude of the old city of Syracuse, are the enormous quarries from which the stone had been hewn in past ages, to construct the houses and temples, the dwellings and places of amusement of the million inhabitants whom history tells us resided within the walls. One of these quarries, which is now the garden of the Capuchin convent, we examined minutely. It is a deep, wall-sided, irregular-shaped cut in the rock, said to be one hundred feet deep. At some places this

huge excavation is a hundred yards broad, at others it is contracted to a tenth part of that width. The ground at the bottom is not level, but rises and falls according, I imagine, as the piles of rubbish were moved hither and thither by the workmen. It is everywhere covered either with vegetables, or with flower-beds, either under the spade of the gardener, or thickly grown up with orange-trees, olives, limes, and figs, some of them absolutely like forest-trees; besides almonds, vines, pomegranates, and other trees, and flowering shrubs, all luxuriating in the shelter of this singular excavation. The sides at most places are richly clad with a matting of ivy, it is difficult to tell how thick, which occasionally hangs down like a curtain, in front of enormous caverns, receding far back into the living rock. The Principal of the convent, greatly pleased with our raptures, showed us over his garden, and was evidently flattered by our saying we had seen nothing in the world so like what we read of in the Arabian Nights.

In another quarry of still vaster dimensions, we visited the celebrated Ear of Dionysius, where the echo is certainly very wonderful; a pistol was fired near the mouth, while we stood at the inner end of the cave, and I counted the reverberations for twenty seconds. I feel it difficult to describe the solemn effect of this sound, which more nearly re-

sembled a peal of thunder, at a short distance, than anything else, but divested of the abrupt, startling, rattling sort of harsh sound, which belongs to thunder. On the contrary, though very loud, the report of a pistol fired in Dionysius's Ear was rather of a soft sound, even from the first, becoming more and more mellow at every repercussion of the air.

In most of these quarries the marks of the workmen's tools are very apparent. It is even possible to tell the size and shape of many of the stones which have been cut out, and sometimes to follow the order in which they were removed. These trivial, but distinct and indubitable traces of the handiwork of the ancients carry with them, it strikes me, a peculiar sort of authenticity and unpretending truth, which bring old times more vividly before our minds than the great works of art do. For it may be almost said that the statues and temples belong to a different and higher order of beings, with whom we moderns have little resemblance. When we lose ourselves in admiration of the Venus, or the Apollo, or stand awe-struck before the Temple of Neptune at Pæstum, it is almost as difficult to bring the imagination up to the belief that we are of the same race with the men who executed these works, as it is when looking at the planet Jupiter, or at the ring of Saturn, to conceive that these stupendous bodies form an

actual part of the same system to which we pigmies belong. We know by history in the one case, and by scientific demonstrations in the other, that it must be so, but it is difficult to take it all in. But the simple touch of a pickaxe on the face of the rock, in an old quarry like that of Syracuse, tells quite a different story, and one which none can doubt. We almost hear the sound ring in our ears, and half wonder that we do not see the crowds of Greek or Roman workmen labouring round about us. I remember feeling something akin to what I experienced in the caves of Syracuse, when walking alone through the streets of Pompeii, and looking into the houses and shops of our predecessors, by seventeen centuries or so, but different in no material respect from men and women of the present day.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE QUARRIES OF PARIS — ARGYLESKIRE —
WALES—ROME—EDINBURGH, AND MELROSE.

I HAVE all my life felt a singular delight in visiting quarries, whether old or recent, abandoned or in work, provided only they were so extensive, as to afford either an insight, geologically speaking, into the structure of the world, or a sort of picture, historically speaking, of the busy workings of man. I am therefore tempted, while treating of the gigantic quarries of Syracuse, to digress a little to one or two other scenes of equal, or even, in some respects, superior interest. Of these I might well place in the first order of importance, the celebrated gypsum quarries of Montmartre, near Paris, which are curious not merely from their vast extent and singularity of shape, but in a much higher degree from their furnishing the greatest library, as it were, of natural history which the genius and industry of man has yet given to the perusal of the world. The celebrated Cuvier and his distinguished

colleagues in geological research, have opened of late years, chiefly by means of these quarries, a field of knowledge heretofore unsuspected, or uncertain, but which may, by their agency, be studied with a degree of exactness of which former inquirers into the fossil history of the earth knew but little in comparison. I should venture strongly to recommend every one who cares at all about the fossil species of animals, which have at one time peopled the surface of the earth, but which are now entirely extinct, to examine the quarries of Montmartre with Cuvier's works in their hand. The time may come, perhaps, when these enormous caverns, the work of man, may assume another kind of interest, similar to that which engages our attention at Syracuse; but at present their curiosity depends chiefly on the insight they afford us, not into the workings of man, but of those of Nature in by gone ages.

Some years ago I made a tour in the Highlands of Scotland, one of my objects being to visit the great slate quarries at Balahulish, and as the foregoing speculations have a bearing on the purpose of the journey alluded to, and are found in connexion with some notices of other quarries in different parts of the world, I shall venture to give them a place here.

It was early in the month of July, during a

season very uncommon for its absence of rain, that we stopped at the neat little village of Killin, at the western end of Loch Tay, on the banks of the stream, forming the principal feeder of that beautiful sheet of water. On looking at the map in the morning, when starting from Kenmore, and finding Killin only sixteen miles off, we naturally counted upon going a good deal further. But distance, in those wild and mountainous parts, as well as in the somewhat similar situations in Sicily, especially when making the tour of Mount Etna, must not be reckoned by miles, but, as they do in Germany, by hours. If the ups and downs of the road in a hilly country were to be stretched out into a straight line, and the labour of climbing, the danger and difficulty of descending the hills, and the annoyance of the joltings and bumpings were taken into the reckoning of the day's work, double or treble the distance might fairly be set down. When speculating in this fashion, it is amusing to glance at the contrast afforded by railway travelling, by which we now accomplish easily, in thirty minutes, what it costs us eight hours of constant exertion to get over in the Highlands!

As we were travelling for pleasure, however, and not for mere speed, and as we were perfectly contented with our quarters, and as our postilion, a cheerful and willing lad, declared it was impos-

sible his horses could go a step further, we made up our minds with no great difficulty to remain at Killin. Next day we pushed through hills to King's House, in the wildest, most forlorn, and most desolate region I ever saw—having nothing in sight all round but barren, or else boggy mountains, naked at top as the day they were born, and bearing on their sides nothing but heath, not in a continuous matting, but divided into ugly, sluggish, black masses of peat-moss, intersected vertically by innumerable channels of mountain torrents, now still and dry, but carrying with them abundant traces of violence at their fitting seasons, when the rains are abroad. At the bottom of each of these water-courses there lies a large assemblage of materials brought down by the stream, and forming a *talus*, or delta, far along the level country.

Sir Walter Scott, in his fine poetical way, compares the career of Bonaparte to such a scene as that above alluded to, in the following singularly graphic lines :—

“ Or is thy soul like mountain tide,
That swelled by winter storm and shower,
Rolls down in turbulence of power,
A torrent fierce and wide :
Reft of these aids, a rill obscure,
Shrinking unnoticed, mean, and poor.
Whose channel shows displayed
The wrecks of its impetuous course,
But not one symptom of the force
By which these wrecks were made !”

“This passage,” says Mr. Lockhart (in language scarcely less poetical than that of his great father-in-law) “always struck me as pre-eminently characteristic of Scott’s manner of interweaving, both in prose and verse, the moral energies with analogous natural description, and combining thought with imagery*.”

The road along which we travelled past King’s House, on our way to the great quarries of Bala-hulish, is the only line of highway in that part of the world, being one of those originally made by Government, though now kept up by the county. As we were winding slowly up the southern side of a weary, black mountain, we came most unexpectedly in sight of a great waggon or caravan—which seemed to our eyes strangely out of place—for what, we thought, could induce any one to bring wild beasts to a still wilder country? On coming nearer to it, we discovered eight or ten men standing round a fire, kindled in a respectable-looking moveable grate; and from the windows of the caravan we detected several curly heads thrust out, evidently attracted by the unusual sound of carriage wheels. Round about lay wheel-barrows, pickaxes, and shovels—whence we soon found that this was a party of road-makers, or rather road-menders. As the country is so entirely desolate,

* Life of Sir W. Scott, Vol. III., p. 387.

and quite destitute of inhabitants, except at long intervals, it would be impossible to maintain workmen steadily at the proper places, without some contrivance of this nature. Like your provident snail, therefore, these poor fellows carry their house and provisions about with them, and go a-voyaging over the moors pretty much in the style that we sea-faring people do over the ocean.

The crew belonging to this caravan or ship of the mountains, consisted of sixteen souls—there being eight beds, or one for every two men—and close stowage, too, as it appeared, since space must have been left for packing away their working-tools, provisions, and clothes. Two stout horses, ready to be employed in drawing cart-loads of gravel and stones to the road under repair, grazed near the caravan, upon what they could catch among the heather. When the vehicle was required to be got under weigh, in order to engage with a new piece of road, the gravel carts were towed behind, and the horses being yoked in front, the whole mass moved a-head together. In this manner, without entering a house, indeed scarcely seeing even a hut, much less a village, these hardy pioneers of the hills continued at work during the whole of the fine season, that is, from the beginning of May to the middle or even to the end of October, which is generally a very favourable month in Scotland. In

this interval they go backwards and forwards along the whole line from Tyndrum to Balahulish, a distance of about thirty-three miles.

Shortly after quitting King's House, we entered the Pass of Glencoe, rendered so notorious in history by the murder committed in the 17th century, on a whole clan of Highlanders who inhabited that extraordinary mountain-pass. This cruelty was perpetrated by order, it is said, of King William III.—and though his guilt in this horrible transaction was nothing in comparison to that of the underlings who egged him on, yet he must for ever share no small portion of the infamy of so wanton a transaction.

The devoted clan, who were called Macdonalds of the Glen, amounted to a very small number, as they seldom mustered above two hundred armed men—and the total number put to death on the morning of the 13th of February, 1692, was only thirty-eight, including women and children, or probably not above one-twentieth of the whole. Yet it is curious, as well as instructive, to remark how much the opinions, and still more the sentiments of mankind, turn upon the manner in which such things are done rather than upon the amount of evil, nationally or individually, which is thereby effected. The most unjust wars may be entered into, and thousands upon thousands of men may cruelly

perish in action, or by pestilence and famine afterwards;—a civil war may rage, and fire and sword be let loose to lay waste a whole country, so that, in fact, a hundred times as many horrors as were perpetrated in Glencoe may be inflicted on the inhabitants—and yet all these shall be either applauded, or forgotten, while such a transaction as the massacre of the Macdonalds is justly handed down to the universal execration of posterity. Can it be doubted that the misery brought upon the world by the selfishness, ambition, and that total want of consideration for others, (which is tantamount in its effects to cruelty,) of Napoleon, was ten thousand times greater in its amount than was wrought in Glencoe by the petty malice of a couple of inferior officers? And yet how different is the judgment of the world in the two cases !

It may be said, however, that this dreadful affair, which has no established parallel for atrocity, at least in this island, has had its good effect in uniting all men's minds on the infamy of assassination in whatever shape—and though, in such peaceful times as these, we may fancy the warning superfluous—there can be no doubt that in war, and especially in civil war (when men are apt to lose the attributes of humanity to assume those of tigers) the importance of distinguishing even between military executions of the severest kinds, and cold-blooded

murders, is of the greatest practical importance. The severity with which the Highlands were visited after the battle of Culloden, for example, though infinitely more extensive, and sometimes fully as cruel in detail, as the murder in Glencoe, had a definite, open, and legitimate purpose in view, however mistaken and occasionally wanton the mode of its execution may have been. But the brutal and truly Cherokee affair of Glencoe defies even the subtlety of political logic, while it is equally repugnant to military manners, and to the common feelings and habits of mankind.

All these considerations impart an extraordinary degree of interest to the glen in question: and I cannot imagine a stronger proof of the inherent sublimity of the spot, physically considered, than the fact of its being able, as it certainly is, to excite any attention in comparison to the moral interest connected with its history. As a piece of perfectly wild mountain scenery Glencoe has no superior that I know of. In the Alps there are many ravines and valleys immensely larger, but I am not aware of any which has better claims to attention in all that relates to the fantastical disposition of barren rocks of great magnitude, tossed indiscriminately about by the hand of Nature.

As to the inhabitants, it is really difficult to understand how four or five hundred people, of which

the extirpated clan is said to have consisted, could possibly have found the means of subsistence in such a region. Although the whole length of Glencoe may be about ten miles, we counted in it only three cottages; nor could we imagine where the rest, if any, were situated. This absence of human habitations lends additional melancholy to the scene,—making it seem as if the slaughter of the clan, who dwelled in it nearly a century and a half ago, had rendered the spot uninhabitable. Moral catastrophes, however—and most fortunate is it that it is so arranged for us—are very like geological ones in this respect, for after a brief season they leave but faint traces of the fury of their ravages; and in point of fact, however terrible at the time, exert but little influence on the habits of those who succeed. A debacle or an avalanche may obliterate, in a moment, every vestige of man's habitation along the whole extent of a populous Swiss valley—an earthquake may shake down a Peruvian or a Calabrian city, or a stream of lava obliterate a Sicilian town; and yet in a few short years afterwards all the houses shall be rebuilt, the fields glowing again with corn, and every trace of violence so completely overlaid by symptoms of tranquillity and prosperity, that the senses almost refuse to admit the evidence of the reason. Even if we have actually witnessed the devastation with our own eyes, we can scarcely trust our memory

when the whole is so speedily changed. I have even witnessed something of the same kind on fields of battle, and in sacked towns, where it was positively difficult, very shortly after the events, not only to find a single person on the spot who knew anything of the shocking scenes which had been enacted there, but even to discover the minutest remnant of violence! So far, indeed, Glencoe is distinguished from most scenes of this kind; for we encounter nobody in those regions on the pages of whose mind the whole transaction does not appear, as it were, to be stereotyped in blood.

We breathed more freely when we found ourselves in the open country again, and, disentangled from the mountains and their very painful associations, came suddenly upon the celebrated excavations of Balahulish.

As these slate-quarries are of considerable extent and importance, I have taken pains to ascertain some of the leading particulars respecting their size, mode of working them, form and quality of the slates, the annual produce of the quarries, and the number of men employed. I have been induced to give these details, as they furnish, I think, better means of judging of that curious locality than any mere verbal description, and are more likely to tempt others to visit a scene of high interest in a geological as well as commercial point

of view. For the substance of the following interesting information on these heads I am indebted to the kind attention of Mr. Henry Stuart, brother of the proprietor.

The Balahulish, or, as they are called on the spot, the Balachelish (though how pronounced I have not an idea) slate quarries, are situated in the parish of Appin, the most northern in the county of Argyle. They were first opened sometime previous to the year 1760, and lie on the side of a high mountain which rises immediately out of the arm of the sea called Loch Leven, one of the branches of the Linnhe Loch. The vein of slate, which dips at an angle of about 80° , commences at the shore and stretches southward along the side of the mountain. The face of the rock is laid open by workings fronting the west, the inclination of the vein being to the east. The workings are conducted in three levels, rising above each other as steps of stairs; all the levels are entered from the north end of the vein, that end of it which abuts upon the sea. Their total height from the bottom of the lowest level to the extreme height of the rock, is about 216 feet; and the face of the rock wrought extends to about 536 feet in length. The first, or lowest, level enters from the high road at a height of twenty-eight feet above half-tide mark. A tram-road extends along the whole face

of the rock to a bank formed in the sea by the rubbish of the quarries; along this road the whole of the quarried rock is carried, the blocks which contain workable slate being manufactured into their various sizes on the bank, and the unproductive part, or rubbish, being thrown into the sea.

It is rather provoking to think that the proportion of workable to unproductive rock is as one to six; and such would soon be the accumulation of rubbish, that if both it and the water did not find a convenient vent in the adjacent sea, the works must be stopped. As it is, no pumps are required, for the water runs off naturally, all the works being open to the sea and above it.

The second level is 66 feet above the bottom of the first, and communicates in the same manner with another bank, also formed in the sea, by an arch thrown over the high road, where its produce is disposed of in the same way as in the first. The third level is 74 feet above the bottom of the second, and rises to the extreme height of the hill in that part, which is 76 feet above its bottom; the produce of the level is conveyed down an inclined plane to the same bank where the second is emptied.

It is in contemplation to open a lower level from the level of half-tide mark, to be wrought in succession to those now in operation, to reach which it

will be necessary to tunnel under the high road. It will be observed that all these levels being above the surface of the sea, and open to it, no interruption to the workings can ever arise from an accumulation of water, which is drained off immediately on its rising.

The harbour, which is safe and commodious, is formed by the banks of rubbish projected into the sea on each side, which completely shelter it from all winds. There is an extensive wharf for shipping, alongside of which vessels of any burden can lie to receive their cargoes. The manufactured slates are conveyed for shipment from the banks by tram-roads on inclined planes to the vessel's side. The distance of the farthest off part of the rock which is wrought to the shipping wharf is 650 yards. The colour of the slate is a deep blue, sprinkled with pyrites, called by the workmen diamonds, which are so incorporated with the slate that they never drop out. The slates are allowed to possess in a pre-eminent degree all the qualities of permanence of colour, strength, and durability of material essential to roof-slate. The various descriptions of slate manufactured are—

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----|---|---|---|-----|---|---|--------------|
| Duchess | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 24 in. by 12 |
| Countess | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 20 „ 10 |
| Sizeable (not of a uniform size, but averaging about) | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 14 „ 8 |
| Undersize | do. | | | | do. | | | 9 „ 5 |

The nature of the rock does not admit of an extensive manufacture of the larger sizes, the chief production being the sizeable and undersized. The annual quantity produced of all the above kinds varies from 8,000 to 11,000 tons, or, in numbers, 5,000,000 to 7,000,000 of slates, of all sizes; they are shipped to almost all the sea-ports in Scotland and Northumberland, from whence they find their way to most parts of the kingdom. Occasional shipments of them are made to the American, West Indian, and Australian colonies; not directly from the quarries, but from ports trading to these countries. The slates are generally shipped in small coasting vessels of from 40 to 100 tons burthen, but occasionally Baltic traders of somewhat larger size call for cargoes, for the ports to the eastward, after discharging in Ireland or on the west coast; so that about 200 vessels of all sizes are loaded annually, whose crews may average about four men each. Besides the various kinds of slates enumerated, pavement and grave stones are manufactured, as well as soles for drain-tiles; but the production for these purposes is very limited, and the consumption local.

I have been tempted to give these details from knowing the additional interest they impart to an examination of a spot lying directly in the way of persons travelling in the West Highlands of Scot-

land, and who cannot fail to be struck with the wonderful contrast which meets their eye on coming suddenly on this animating bustle of human industry, out of the deep solitudes of the Black Mount and of Glencoe. It is not to be denied, however, that this contrast, and the isolated nature of their position, are very apt to make the Balahulish slate quarries appear of more extent and importance than they really are. On those of Lord Breadalbane, in the same county, as many men are employed, but his lordship's works are not all conducted at one place, which renders them less striking to the eye as a scene of activity. He also sinks into the earth to get at his slates, while Mr. Stuart, at Balahulish, slices down a hill, and therefore, as one excavation, wrought on a regular system, they are by far the largest in Scotland. Still they are child's-play compared to the prodigious slate-quarries in Wales. The Penrhyn quarries, near Bangor, the property of Mr. Dawkins Pennant, are very similarly situated in a mountainous country, and wrought on the same principles as those at Balahulish. There are no fewer than ten levels, all rising above each other, and employment is given to upwards of 2,000 men ! The slates are shipped at the port of Bangor, of which they form the exclusive trade ; but from 50 to 100 vessels may be sometimes seen

at a time, and some of them of large burthen, waiting for cargoes, destined for all parts of the world. Bangor is admirably situated for this purpose, as it stands on the high road of commerce, and nearly the whole trading vessels of Liverpool, wherever they are bound, can call without going much out of their course. Compared to those of Scotland, these quarries are far more wonderful works; for while they are said to yield to their proprietor between £30,000 and £40,000 a year, the annual exports from Balahulish are only about £10,000. These Welch slates are of a more uniformly smooth surface, and split thinner than those of Argyleshire, and though not so hard, they are capable of being made of almost any dimensions.

Near Llhanberris there is another huge slate-quarry, belonging to Mr. Aslton Smith, which is nearly as extensive as Mr. Pennant's; and besides these leviathans there are innumerable quarries of the same description scattered over North Wales, many of them as large, and employing as many hands, as those of Scotland; but there is not one of them all possesses more interest, or lies nearly so much in the way of tourists, as that of Balahulish, which is my reason for having dwelt so minutely upon its details.

Besides the great quarries above-mentioned—the interest of which lies chiefly in their scientific

curiosity, as at Paris, or in their commercial importance, as in Scotland and in Wales—there are others which may be said to belong to history. They are among the most obvious touches of the handwriting of man on the face of the earth, and certainly the most enduring. The Coliseum at Rome, and the five hundred churches, the monuments of antiquity, the gorgeous palaces of the middle ages, and the cloud-capped towers of the Italian wars—which their vain founders intended for eternity—are all fast mouldering away under the biting influence of Time, in spite of the buttresses which successive kings and popes have erected to blunt that sweeping old gentleman's scythe. Meanwhile the huge quarries out of which all these edifices have been extracted exist entire, and bear witness to the extent not only of those buildings, but that of a long succession of cities, each in its turn nicknamed Eternal!

The quarries just alluded to, out of which so many edifices of Rome have been built, are well worthy of a visit on the way to 'Tivoli. We have there also rather a striking example of the extreme insignificance of even the mightiest works of man's hand, during the short span of his existence, compared with the smallest touches from the hand of Nature. At first sight, while we are lost and bewildered with the extent of these prodigious Roman

quarries, the mind looks back with a sort of awe to the busy operations of which this scene has been the theatre. We see, in imagination, thousands upon thousands of workmen digging up columns for temples to their gods, façades for palaces to their Cæsars, and building-stones for the houses of that "Senate and people" who made their influence be felt over the whole known world. We can readily fancy the time when the numerous roads to and from Rome were crowded with carts conveying these materials; and as we stand on the edge of the mighty excavation, can almost fancy we still see the distant city, the mistress of the earth, rising above its seven hills. All is now silent and solitary. The quarries overgrown with weeds and brambles, the roads obliterated, and the city which gave laws to mankind, reduced to a petty state, under a handful of powerless monks!

If we turn from this scene of utter desolation and the entire stoppage of man's proceedings, to inquire what Nature has been doing in the interval, we shall have a very different story to tell. No doubt there was a time when the operations of the Roman quarriers were so active that alarmists among them might have looked with anxiety to the period when the stone should be worked, just as we may contemplate with apprehension the time when the coal seams of England shall be exhausted.

But the reproductive powers of Nature in both cases, though generally far more gentle in their action, are spread over so wide a space, and are so unintermitting, though often unseen, that they win the race in the long-run of ages.

If, when examining these ancient Roman quarries, we ask of what materials and in what manner the stone is made, we immediately discover that it is not of the same volcanic character as the rocks forming the circumjacent high grounds. The excavations, we find, have been made in a plain, the upper strata of which consist entirely of a calcareous stone, the exclusive work of a single mineral spring supplying a very small lake, or rather pool of water, called, in former times, *Lacus Albula*, and now, the Lake of *Solfaterra*. This extraordinary "source,"—this least of causes for some of the greatest effects observable on the earth's surface, lies in the centre of the plain or *campagna* of Rome; and by the simple, silent, unseen, agency of the minute deposits which its waters throw down has the whole of that vast area of solid rock, of an unknown thickness, been formed. The spring, it will be understood, takes its rise, and feeds the lake, on a high part of the *campagna*, which, in fact, is not strictly a level plain, but slopes gently on all sides, like a *glacis*, from this central point. As the water, which is much heated, and copiously charged with mineral matter, rises con-

stantly, the lake as constantly overflows, and by spreading itself, in a very thin layer, over the ground, it is soon cooled; the pure water being then evaporated, the calcareous matter is deposited among the grass and shrubs, which are presently encrusted with a stony coating, and the interstices being likewise filled up, the whole is cemented together into a compact rock called travertine. This stone is of a beautiful yellowish-brown colour, and is admirably suited for architectural purposes, not only from the richness of its tint, but from the facility with which it may be fashioned by the chisel, and its great durability under the action of the elements.

The petrifying properties of the waters of the Solfaterra spring are extraordinary. If, as Sir Humphrey Davy relates in his singular book, entitled "Consolations in Travel," a stick be immersed in this spring, it will soon be coated over with an incrustation of stony matter, which, as he explains, consists of calcareous materials. And it is clear that in time, when the wood decays, and is washed away, the form of the stick is preserved, and either the petrification exhibits a hollow pipe, or it is gradually filled up by successive deposits of stony matter. In like manner, it is easy to conceive that every blade of grass, every flower, and every wild bush, with which the plain is matted over, offers a mould upon which the petrifying waters greedily fasten to deposit their load of cal-

careous matter. In most cases, though not in all, the woody, as well as the vegetable nuclei rot and disappear, while their place is supplanted by the mineral matter of the spring. Thus, while the rock, in many parts, exhibits the forms of plants, broken sticks, weeds, and so forth, it is found to be quite solid when carved in upon. Not unfrequently portions of wood, blades of grass, and other traces of the vegetation which grew on the surface of the plain, are found so completely and hermetically cased in the travertine, that, being excluded from the air, before the process of decay has advanced to a certain stage, they obtain an immortality denied to the rest. The passage above alluded to in Sir Humphrey Davy's book is so curious, philosophically speaking, and so eloquent in itself as a piece of composition, that I am tempted to quote it here. "In May," says he, "I fixed a stick in a mass of travertine covered by the water, and I examined it in the beginning of April following, for the purpose of determining the nature of the depositions. The water was lower at this time, yet I had some difficulty, by means of a sharp-pointed hammer, in breaking the mass which adhered to the bottom of the stick; it was several inches in thickness. The upper part was a mixture of light tufa and the leaves of *confervæ*: below this was a darker and more solid travertine, containing black and decomposed masses of con-

fervæ; in the interior part the travertine was more solid and of a grey colour, but with cavities which I have no doubt were produced by the decomposition of vegetable matter.

“I have passed,” continues the philosopher, “many hours, I may say many days, in studying the phenomena of this wonderful lake. It has brought many trains of thought into my mind connected with the early changes of our globe; and I have sometimes reasoned from the forms of plants and animals preserved in marble, in this warm source, to the grander depositions in the secondary rocks, where the zoophytes or coral insects have worked upon a grand scale, and where palms and vegetables now unknown are preserved with the remains of crocodiles, turtles, and gigantic extinct animals of the Sauri genus, and which appear to have belonged to a period when the whole globe possessed a much higher temperature.

“I have likewise often been led from the remarkable phenomena surrounding me in that spot, to compare the works of man with those of nature. The baths, erected nearly twenty centuries ago, present only heaps of ruins, and even the bricks of which they were built, though hardened by fire, are crumbled into dust; whilst the masses of travertine around it, though formed by a variable source from the most perishable materials, have hardened by time, and the most perfect remains of the great-

est ruins in the eternal city, such as the triumphal arches, and the Coliseum, owe their duration to this source. Then, from all we know, this lake, except in some change in its dimensions, continues nearly in the same state in which it was described 1700 years ago by Pliny, and I have no doubt contains the same kind of floating islands, the same plants, and the same insects. During the fifteen years that I have known it, it has appeared precisely identical in these respects; and yet it has the character of an accidental phenomenon, depending upon subterranean fire. How marvellous then are those laws by which even the humblest types of organic existence are preserved, though born amidst the sources of their destruction, and by which a species of immortality is given to generations floating, as it were, like evanescent bubbles on a stream raised from the deepest caverns of the earth, and instantly losing what may be called its spirit in the atmosphere. *"

It is quite easy for the imagination to follow all these processes, without taxing its powers as sharply as the geologists are in the habit of doing in many cases. All we require in this, as in most instances of geological reasoning, is an unlimited allowance of time. Give us this, and having set our mineral spring to work in the middle of a volcanic plain, after the turbulent fires, and fierce eruptions which,

* Consolations in Travel, page 127.

for a long series of ages, may have disturbed the neighbourhood of Rome, are all extinguished. The water passing through the heart of the rocks which may require thousands of years to cool, will not only come to the surface warm, but charged, as Sir H. Davy has shown, with more than its own volume of carbonic acid gas, and with a heavy load of mineral matters. It will proceed to flow all round, and to deposit, at every successive moment, a thin layer of calcareous stone, gradually diminishing the inequalities on the surface of the plain, and by slow degrees elevating its surface. That part of the plain which lies nearest to the hot spring will, naturally, rise most, as it will be the first to rob the water of its petrifying ingredients—so that we can understand why the outlet should be found on the top of a sort of circular glacis, sloping gently in all directions, forming the surface of a series of extremely thin travertine strata, but in the aggregate probably of enormous thickness.

That this is what has been going on for a countless series of ages, is a fact which at once becomes evident to the observer on the spot, when he compares what is actually passing under his eye, with what has taken place lower down, and which the architects of the buildings round the Roman forum have enabled us by their excavations to examine.

To suppose that the hand of man could interfere

with the course of such stupendous, though silent and gradual operations, seems, at first sight, out of the question. Generally speaking, indeed, it is so ; for the influence of man, much as he thinks of his power, the spread of agriculture, and other symptoms of his handiwork, is exceedingly small, geologically considered. In the instance, however, of this celebrated spring and lake of Solfaterra, it happens that the course of nature has, for once, been entirely changed in its direction, and her works effectually put a stop to in one spot. A channel having been cut in the rock, on one side of the lake, it no longer overflows, and the feeding waters of the spring, instead of being spread in thin sheets over the Campagna, now run off in a straight line, and eventually fall into the river Anio. There can, therefore, be no fresh deposits on the plain, and of course the rocky matter ceases to be formed, for the mineral ingredients are mixed with the waters of the river. The only visible effect which they produce is to kill all the fish between the confluence of this hot and poisonous stream with the Anio, and the point where it falls into the Tiber.

The next greatest quarries which I recollect after those which indent the campagna of Rome, are the prodigious excavations at Syracuse in Sicily, described in the last chapter, of which the celebrated Dionysius's Ear is merely a single

corner. While the city, of which these quarries furnished the materials, has vanished so completely from the face of the earth, that it requires some trouble to find its traces, the excavations which gave it birth are as perfect as ever.

In vivid contrast to poor old Syracuse stands the New town of Edinburgh—a city with more pretensions, and less title to distinction, so far as the picturesque effect of mere buildings is concerned, than any capital in Europe. These pretensions are rendered still less substantial by the happy elegance of outline of the Old town alongside of it, by the boldness of the castle which overlooks both, and by the matchless beauty, occasional grandeur, and pleasing variety, of the adjacent scenery—which includes not only very respectable mountains, richly cultivated plains, wooded valleys, and, above all, one of the finest specimens of estuary scenery which is to be found in the wide world. The only match that I know of for the glorious Firth of Forth, viewed from the castle of Edinburgh, is the Gulf of St. Lawrence, seen from the ramparts of Quebec. In both cases the extent of water is great enough to show that it is the ocean we are looking at; and yet the width is not so vast as entirely to remove the idea of a river, at the same time that the high grounds which form their banks would be in character with streams of such gigantic dimensions, supposing these arms of

the sea to be rivers. I mention this last feature of the two landscapes in question, because in the case of one of the largest streams in the world—the Rio de la Plata, in South America—almost all idea of a river is done away with, in consequence of one bank not being visible from the other—a circumstance caused partly by the lowness of the country, and partly by the great width of the stream.

Of the many objects of interest in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, I am not sure that there is any one better worthy of a stranger's examination than the quarry of Craig Leith, out of which the aforesaid formal New town has been built. It is not so extensive as those of Rome and Syracuse, but the excavations, instead of straggling along for several miles, having been confined to one spot, form an enormous amphitheatre, 250 feet in depth, and of just proportionate width, all hollowed out of the living rock! In this area, with very little additional carving, a million of people might readily be accommodated with seats; and I never looked at this stupendous indenture in the earth's surface without thinking of the noblest of amphitheatrical buildings ever erected above its level, I mean the Coliseum at Rome.

Finally, to wind up this catalogue of quarries, I may call the attention of tourists to the excavation from which the beautiful Abbey of Melrose was supplied with materials for its construction.

This curious spot is rendered of surpassing interest in my eyes, from its having been pointed out to me by Sir Walter Scott himself, during a long walk which I had the honour and happiness to take with him one day along the banks of his favourite Tweed. While he expatiated on the motives which gave rise to the building before us, and traced its rise, progress, and decay to the same causes which first raised up and then broke down the wealth and power of its founders, I could not help glancing my eye to the walls of his own fantastic Abbotsford, nor speculating on their present and future history, and thinking with what interest, many centuries hence, the quarry might be sought for which furnished what few stones may then be left standing one upon another, of the habitation of the good and Great Unknown !

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